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THE CRIME OF THE AGE.

It has been very justly observed by Macaulay, that there are fashions in crime as in everything else. Crimes come in and go out, like neckcloths; they reflect the ages successively, and conform to the laws of "supply and demand," like every other article. Now and then they attain such prominence in some one shape, that mankind are driven to contrive measures to neutralise their consequences, for their own protection. We have just arrived at one of these stages in England. Poisoning is the fashionable crime,—that is to say, poisoning by the means of certain institutions, which society has established for purposes quite opposite to murder. Everything has its weak, or dangerous side, and there is one handle to it for the good man, and one for the scoundrel. We suppose that there are so many scoundrels, born in every age; that the nature of the age determines in what way they shall display their faculties; that every period has its experience to go through, before it can finally detect its scoundrels, hang them, and amend the conditions under which they have learned to work.

Poisoning itself, considered *simpliciter*, is one of the oldest crimes in the world, of course. The moment that drugs were found available for any purpose, it must have been seen that death was one of them. The opiate that induces sleep may easily make sleep eternal; the grains which give a fillip to the blood may hurry it into fever. Crime follows knowledge, like its shadow: it is the after-taste of the fruit of the Tree. But poisoning is peculiarly the crime of civilisation. In early days, violence is the characteristic of crime, as of everything else; in later days, craftiness or cunning. The dagger carried off the enemy in early Rome; the Emperor Claudius was poisoned by a mushroom. Indeed, as Rome became corrupt, poisoning became more and more the regular crime of the day. It is a favourite topic with Juvenal. Historians mention rumours of poison as regularly as they mention notable deaths. To say that a potentate died *haud seise suspitione veneni*, was almost as much a matter of form as to write his epitaph. The poet and the moralist have delighted to exhibit the terror of the tyrant on this one fatal point. For what can guard against a death which lurks in daily food, in the cup of the banquet, in the glitter of wine, in the familiar objects of common life? There is a remarkable story in Froissart, how one of the great house of De Foix fell dead while washing his hands after hunting, and how his squires immediately began drinking the water, to prove their innocence. It has always been felt, that, of all crimes, none is so much a matter for delicate handling—suspicion, care, watchful use of evidence. It is so hard to guard against it—it is so easy to commit it. Blood tells its own story so loudly, that men do not care to risk detection; poison tempts the coward—tempts the worst sort of villain—that most fatal of all villains, who is prudent, calculating, and not impulsive. Indeed, we do not hesitate to say, that, in these cases, circumstantial evidence should assume a more important aspect than in others.

Now, civilisation of the modern kind has its own evils, over and above those of the ancient civilisation, exactly as it adds more of experience to the stock of mankind. Science is the great modern fact. Science, in the last century, demanded dissections of the human body. The demand led to grave-stealing; and stealing from graves being found insufficient, we had the murders of Burke and Hare. This led to legal reforms, and one kind of crime terminated. We suppose that the same kind of men who then murdered to sell to surgeons, would now murder to defraud burial clubs. The higher class of villain, who, in the last century, poisoned coarsely, would now (chemistry having advanced)



THE NIGHTINGALE JEWEL.
(COPIED FROM THE ORIGINAL, BY PERMISSION OF H.R.H. PRINCE ALBERT.)

poison with refinement. To blame science for this would be idiotic; we must only try and provide against the partial evil which science has brought us, along with much good.

Insurance societies, burial clubs, and so forth, are institutions most characteristic of our time, and of great utility. They are prudent—sober—calculative. "Individualism" makes people avail themselves of their neighbours, without incurring the obligation which modern independence and isolation hates. So we band together for a kind of trade protection, and fraternise without being fraternal. The utility is indubitable. With the utility has come the inevitable shadow. The floating capital of criminality has found a new investment. The devil finds his entry into the new body as easily as he did into the serpent.

This form of poisoning is to life insurance what the Burke and Hare murders were to the progress of anatomy. It is the blot on the 'scutcheon of our commercial prudence, as those crimes were on that of our medical science. It is to life insurance what arson is to fire insurance.

The dangers arising from the practice are greater now than those which arose from the old historic poisonings of Italy; for in such times people were on their guard—and in such times, too, only individuals of some eminence were in much danger. But now the crime is a matter of business and arithmetical calculation. It is not done at the promptings of jealousy, but done simply to turn a penny. In

short, it is worse than those crimes which spring from great passions, inasmuch as it is a mean business prompted by the vulgarest greed, and rivaling the wickedness of a Borgia from the motives of a pedlar.

We have, indeed, always believed that a scoundrel is essentially a prosaic character; nor did we ever see anything in a penny romance which altered our opinion—though the penny romance school of literature endeavours to invest scoundrels with a halo of poetic interest. Iago is a man of brutal selfishness and low views. "Most of the great villains I have known," says Swift, "have been brutes in their understandings, as well as in their characters." We see every day, that, when the policeman captures the murderer, the fellow is not buying violets, but gorging tripe. Now, our modern poisoner is not only a prosaic villain, but his line of business tends to seduce peculiarly prosaic villains into it. For a generous nature may be betrayed into a great crime by passion; but he who poisons to cheat an insurance office, can have no motive but the pence. He does not even hate his victim. It is not revenge which maddens him—he may even rather like him as a companion—but a commercial calculation makes him pick him out as the best fellow for his purpose, and he kills a human being as coolly as a rat-catcher kills a rat. Then, the chance of secrecy—the fact that death by poison so often resembles death by disease—tempt the cunning and cowardly. Probably, too, a certain vanity, which (as distinct from pride) is often found in criminals, finds its gratification in this particular mode of causing death. The rascal feels that he is doing a scientific stroke of business, and has a more delicate hand than Cain, his primeval prototype. He considers butchery vulgar, and hugs himself with the idea that, if detected, he shall interest Liebig, and show some acquaintance, perhaps, with the great work of Orfila!

In another part of our paper the reader will find details, showing that these crimes are, beyond all question, on the increase. Publicity itself, though clearly unavoidable, seems to have partially the effect of stimulating them. When the Essex poisonings of some years since were exposed, it was found that hints, which had dropped from the physicians about the cause of detection in some cases,



FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.—(FROM A DRAWING BY HER SISTER.)

COPIED BY PERMISSION OF HER EXCELLENCY THE ENGLISH AMBASSADOR FROM THE ENGRAVING BY HALL.



were turned to practical use in the cases which followed. However, let us be thankful that every new explosion and exposure tends to increase the public knowledge of the danger, and to sharpen the sagacity of those whose business it is to take precautions against its recurrence. The public mind awakened to the matter, will not now let it go to sleep till all that the wit of man can do, in the way of social protection, has been evoked, discussed, turned into experience, and embodied in law.

Assuming, then—that we prove elsewhere—that the practice of these crimes is on the increase, let us consider what circumstances give facility and encouragement to its commission. Why a man should be a murderer is a metaphysical question; what conditions are favourable to murder, generally, is a practical, social one.

We apprehend that the reckless greediness of trading, which leads to adulterated food, swindling banks, dangerous railways, rotten army stores, houses where, if you escape death, you are tortured by rheumatism, Goldonian preserved meat, &c., &c.,—has much to answer for in this, as in every other matter. We have before observed, that what Cicero says of the arts, is also true of crimes—they are all connected together, as by a chain: they propagate and spread. A crop of hastily established insurance companies must snatch at every life they can get. The poisoner in *posse*, who is only awaiting temptation, argues that any life will be taken, and that, therefore, he can pick out, at his leisure, the likeliest individual to sacrifice. We think it probable that such a man would be a villain in any case, but, of course, he is more likely to employ his villainy where he can do it with convenience than elsewhere. Society must consider these points, since the law cannot do everything; but the function of punishing belongs to the law, and the less that is checked by a foolish and mischievous tendency to spare the guilty at the expense of the innocent, the better. We are by no means satisfied that the nonsense talked against hanging has not increased crime, precisely as the nonsense talked against war encouraged Russia to break the peace. In that point of view, the Quakers and Mr. Bright will probably be, in the long run, the best friends of the gunnaker and the hangman.

We have purposely refrained from the question, whether the man now accused of so many murders—Palmer—is or is not guilty. The question is one independent of the general question before us, since poisoning is assuredly becoming more common—whether he is a poisoner or not; and since the persons he is charged with murdering certainly died of poison, somehow, whether he administered it or not. The tribunals of the land will decide formally on him in due time. Our business now is with an undoubted and black phenomenon in the character of this age, which we shall all do well to consider, as the first step towards getting rid of it.

THE NIGHTINGALE JEWEL.

THE deep interest which is so generally felt by all classes towards that noble-minded lady, who, quitting the enjoyment of social comfort at the risk of life and health, devoted herself, by tender attention and unwearied care, to alleviate the sufferings of the brave defenders of our rights, cannot but be increased by the knowledge that this sympathy is also that of the highest persons of this realm. The public, it is presumed, will be gratified with our representation, on the preceding page, of the jewel lately presented by her Majesty to Miss Nightingale, the design of which is said to be from the pencil of no less a personage than the Prince Consort, by whom it was entrusted to the hands of Mr. Garrard, the Crown Jeweller, for execution.

If a sight of the jewel itself were possible, any attempt at description would be superfluous; but as our humble sketch can give but a poor idea of precious stones and metals, it must be left to the imagination of our readers, even after our best attempt.

The form of the jewel is oval; the ground or field is of pure white enamel, bearing a crimson cross, on which, in diamonds, are the letters "V.R.," and the Royal crown; from the centre issue golden rays, implying "heavenly sympathy." This is enclosed by an oval band of black enamel—black being an emblem of good counsel—on which, in gold, are the feeling words, "Blessed are the merciful." On either side spring branches of palm in gold and green enamel, denoting the peaceful occupation and triumphant result of her gentle though firm labours. The colour green may also be considered to imply eternal friendship. The label, bearing the word "Crimes," is in azure blue, similar to that of the ribbon of the Crimean medal. The whole is surmounted by three brilliant diamond stars, the celestial signification of which is obvious. Notwithstanding the beauty and good taste displayed in the arrangements of this jewel, the whole is eclipsed by the noble expression of the Royal feeling in the inscription borne on the reverse, to which comment on our part is unnecessary:—

"To Miss Flora Nightingale, as a mark of esteem and gratitude for her devotion towards the Queen's brave soldiers. From Victoria R. 1855."

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

If the aphorism of Hannah Moore be a sound one, that "the care of the poor is the profession of women," few of the sex have shown a greater aptitude for their calling than the leader of that band of noble ladies, who, at the close of 1854, left their native land to devote themselves to the succour of the afflicted, and to bind up, as far as was in their power, the wounds which war had made. Florence Nightingale, the younger daughter and co-heiress of William Shore Nightingale, Esq., of Embley Park, Hampshire, and Leigh Hurst, Derbyshire, was born at Florence in the year 1823, and received her Christian name in memory of that place. Her father, who is a member of an old Yorkshire family, formerly bore the name of Shore, and only assumed that of Nightingale on succeeding to the property and estates of a distant relative. He married, early in life, the daughter of the late William Smith, Esq., Member for Norwich, an ardent labourer for slave emancipation, and a general promoter of every good work. As the child of intellectual no less than of affluent parents, the youth of Florence Nightingale was passed under the circumstances most favourable to the development of her moral and mental life; and that spirit of philanthropy and love of letters, which formed part of her natural inheritance, were cultivated with the most sedulous attention. Under the guidance of her father, she gradually attained proficiency in classics and mathematics, as well as a general acquaintance with science, literature, and art. Nor was the ordinary range of feminine accomplishments omitted from her education, as she is a good musician, and can boast of some knowledge of almost all the modern languages, speaking those of France, Italy, and Germany, with scarcely less facility than her native tongue. In the prosecution of her studies she has been an extensive traveller; having visited most of the cities of the Continent, and even penetrated far into Egypt, making friends and acquaintance of every class and creed among whom her lot has been cast, and thus storing up fresh experience of human nature and human life. Endowed with independence, and a home embracing all that is rich in art and beautiful in nature; surrounded by affection, and gifted with a heart and mind to appreciate such blessings, Florence Nightingale might fairly say, "The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places." Why, then, it might be asked, should she forego all the delights of life to dwell among sights and sounds that might appal the strongest heart? Simply because, whilst gathering up the good things of the outward existence so abundantly showered upon her, and fulfilling the requirements of her station even to the offering of "the mint and the cummin" of a presentation at Court, her tender heart and energetic nature yearned after something even more satisfying than the fruits and flowers of an intellectual life. She had gone into the world—had seen sorrow that might be soothed, vice that might be reformed, misery that might be relieved, and she longed to do something for the afflicted emphatically called "His brethren," by the great Founder of our faith, who, in His providence, had done so much for herself.

From a very early age she evinced a strong sympathy and affection for her kind; as a child she was accustomed to minister to the necessities of the poor and needy around her father's estates, purchasing the privilege by frequent acts of self-denial; and in her youth she became still further their teacher, comforter, and friend. As Miss Nightingale advanced to an age which admitted of independent action, she frequented and studied the schools, hospitals, and reformatory institutions of London, Edinburgh, and the Continent, gathering up knowledge wherever it might be found. Four years ago, when all Europe seemed keeping holiday in honour of the Great Exhibition, she took up her abode in an institution at Kaiserwerth, on the Rhine, where Protestant Sisters of Mercy are trained for the business of nursing the sick and other offices of charity. For three months she remained in daily and nightly attendance, accumulating the most valuable practical experience, and then returned home to wait patiently until an occasion should arise for its exercise. The strong tendency of her mind to look beyond her own immediate sphere did not long leave her without a definite interest. Her energies were now exerted on behalf of a class who had been too long neglected by the happy and the affluent; sufferers belonging to that order whom the Spanish pathetically designate as the "blushing poor." Hearing that the Sanatorium for Governesses in Harley Street was languishing for want of systematic management and effectual support, she volunteered to place herself at its head. Leaving the comforts and pleasures of home, Florence Nightingale took up her abode within its walls, devoting all her time and much of her fortune to the practical and permanent re-organisation of that valuable institution. In this case, as in others, she proved her determination to do thoroughly the work that she had set herself to accomplish; and as reforms are not accomplished without labour, or great achievements performed without a vigorous exercise of self-denial, the few friends who were admitted to her presence at this time usually found her in the midst of nurses, prescriptions, letters, accounts, interruptions, and all the multifarious duties of a regular hospital chief. Having remained in Harley Street as long as appeared necessary for the satisfactory working of the institution in the welfare of which she had taken such deep and active interest, Miss Nightingale returned to the country, to re-establish her own health, and to gather up fresh strength for the next demand that should be made upon her. It came after no long interval, and proved to be of a character infinitely more arduous than any of those which had hitherto presented themselves. A mournful cry of distress had reached us from our wounded brethren in the East, languishing on their beds of pain and sickness, for want of that efficient care and those manifold comforts (in their condition absolute necessities) which the existing system of hospital treatment seemed incapable of affording. Instantly arose an enthusiastic desire to answer it; for England is not ungrateful to her preservers. But something more was wanting than even warm hearts and willing hands; for undisciplined zeal could achieve but little in such an emergency; and, unfortunately, we had none of those "vowed servants of the poor," who form so useful and beautiful a feature of the Catholic Church. A proposition, however, for the immediate formation of a band of female nurses, to be despatched to the seat of war, found favour with the Government and a large mass of the public. It is said to have emanated originally from Lady Maria Forester, and it was at the request of that lady, seconded by that of Mr. Sidney Herbert, Secretary-at-War, that Miss Nightingale consented to undertake the management of the expedition, and to place herself at its head. Not a moment was lost in unnecessary delay; she herself had counted the cost, and shrank not from its payment; whilst her parents, scarcely less self-denying, were content to give up their child to so holy a service. A very short time sufficed for preliminary arrangements; and on the 5th of November, 1854, she arrived at Constantinople in the steam-ship *Vectis*, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Bracebridge, her valuable coadjutors, and by thirty-seven experienced nurses, many of them volunteers, like herself, from the higher ranks of life. The whole party was speedily established at their new quarters in the barrack-hospital at Scutari, and the occupation awaiting them there was increased in a few hours by the arrival of 600 wounded, sent down after the battle of Inkermann. At such a juncture the services of the nurses were acknowledged by the attendant surgeons to be invaluable; how ardently they were appreciated by the patients themselves, many an individual tribute of gratitude has since proved to us. The details of this labour of love, pursued so unremittingly for many months, have been too widely diffused to need recapitulation here. It is well known that, with some very few exceptions, the subordinates have never been found wanting either in will or power; whilst the strength and energy brought to bear by Miss Nightingale herself on the difficulties of her position, have surpassed, like the good she has effected, even the hopeful anticipations of those who knew the extraordinary capabilities of her nature. "Every day," observes a qualified witness, "brought some new complication of misery to be somehow unravelled by the power ruling in the sisters' tower. Each day had its peculiar trial to one who had taken such a load of responsibility in an untried field, and with a staff of her own sex all new to it. She has frequently been known to stand twenty hours, on the arrival of fresh detachments of sick, apportioning quarters, distributing stores, directing the labours of her corps, assisting at the most painful operations where her presence might soothe or support, and spending hours over men dying of cholera or fever. Indeed, the more awful to every sense any particular case might be, the more certainly might be seen her slight form bending over him, administering to his ease by every means in her power, and seldom quitting his side till death had released him. And yet, probably, Miss Nightingale's personal devotion to the cause was, in her own estimation, the least onerous of her duties. The difficulties thrown in her way by the restrictions of *system*, and the prejudices of individuals, will scarcely be forgotten; or the daily contests by which she was compelled to wring from the authorities a scant allowance of the appliances needed in the daily offices of her band, until the co-operation of Mr. Macdonald, the distributor of the "Times" Fund, enabled her to lay in stores; to institute separate culinary and washing establishments; and, in short, to introduce comfort and order into the department over which she presided. The executive strength at her disposal, it may be observed, had been increased early in January by the arrival of Miss Stanley, with 50 more nurses, many of whom were dispersed to different parts of the country, where their services were particularly needed. The gradual growth of Miss Nightingale's influence on all who came in contact with her might probably be traced, to a certain extent, in the increased vitality which began to pervade other branches of the hospital establishments, and which finally re-organised satisfactorily the whole aspect of affairs within its walls. When it became apparent that the most important portion of her work at Scutari was achieved, she proceeded to Balaclava, for the purpose of inspecting its hospitals; arriving there on the 4th of May. No sooner were the affairs of the sisters and nurses arranged, new huts built, kitchens erected, and vigorous action instituted, by the help of the authorities, than Florence Nightingale's long-continued exertions told on a frame always somewhat feeble; and, completely prostrated by an attack of Crimean fever, she was carried up to the hut-hospital on the heights. At the end of a fortnight the severity of the attack had abated, and a voyage to England was strongly recommended. No persuasions could, however, induce her to go further than Scutari, and after quietly remaining there sufficiently long for the comparative re-establishment of her health, she resumed her active duties and ordinary course of life. As the period of Miss Nightingale's return to England and her ordinary sphere of occupation will probably not be very long deferred, it has been suggested that an acceptable testimonial of public gratitude might be offered to her on her arrival, in the shape of a fund for the foundation of a new hospital, to be worked on her own principle of unpaid labour; and, judging from the tenor of her past life, it cannot be doubted that the opportunity of future exertion would be the most congenial recompense for her noble self-devotion. "Miss Nightingale," observes the author of "Scutari and its Hospitals," "is just what you would expect in any other well-bred woman, who may have seen, perhaps, rather more than 30 years of life; her manner and countenance are prepossessing, and this without the possession of positive beauty; it is a face not easily forgotten—pleasing in its smile, with an eye betokening great self-possession, and giving, when she wishes, a quiet look of firm determination to every feature. Her general demeanour is quiet and rather reserved; still, I am much mistaken if she is not gifted with a very

lively sense of the ridiculous. In conversation, she speaks on matters of business with a grave earnestness one would not expect from her appearance. She has evidently a mind disciplined to restrain, under the principles of the action of the moment, every feeling which would interfere with it. She has trained herself to command, and learnt the value of conciliation towards others and constraint over herself." In conclusion, the same author records his opinion, that Florence Nightingale is the individual who in this whole war has shown more than any other, real energy, guided by good sense, can do to meet the calls of sudden emergency. The important service rendered by her to her own sex, in breaking down the barrier of prejudice which had crushed many a noble impulse, will surely be exemplified through generations to come, by the healthy activity and increased happiness of many an Englishwoman's life.

The very admirable likeness of Miss Nightingale on the previous page, is from a beautiful line engraving by Hall, of which our copy furnishes but a faint idea. We are indebted to Messrs. Collaghi for the permission to make this copy.

Foreign Intelligence.

FRANCE.

THE Emperor has ordered apartments to be prepared at the Elysée and elsewhere for the official residence of the members of the Peace Conference.

The Emperor visited the Palace of St. Cloud last week, to give orders for different preparations to be made for the reception of the Empress, who it is said is about shortly to take up her residence there.

The Bonapartist "poets" are said to be busily engaged in the composition of poems intended to greet the Imperial infant.

It is said that the dissolution of the Polytechnic school has been decided on. The school of St. Cyr is to be transferred to Vincennes, the original building not being spacious enough. The pupils destined for military engineering are to study in the same place, so that the three arms of the profession will have their seat at Vincennes. These changes will not take place for two or three months.

The session of the French Legislative Corps will probably open on the 25th.

SPAIN.

THE Madrid journals of the 23rd state, that a document has been received from Rome, being the reply of the Holy See to the memorandum published by the Spanish Government on the rupture of diplomatic relations several months ago. This is of immense length, comprising 111 large quarto pages; but it is said to be written in a conciliatory spirit. The Grand Central Railway Company of France had already sent engineers to Madrid to commence operations on the Saragossa line conceded to it.

The establishment of the Credit Society of Catalonia will be authorised.

AUSTRIA.

THE Emperor, as a mark of consideration for his illustrious ally, Queen Victoria, has granted a pardon to Colonel Tarr.

The Prince de Lieven, formerly Minister of Russia, has arrived at Vienna.

The Emperor has ordered the construction of three war steamers (seres) at Venice and Pola, to be finished in the course of the present year.

The typhus fever is committing great ravages at Vienna, as many as 12,000 cases having occurred.

PRUSSIA.

THE Military Society of Berlin celebrated the birthday of Frederick the Great on the 24th. The historiographer to the King, M. Preuss, read an address, the King, the Princes of the Royal family, M. de Humboldt, Generals Wrangel and de Groeben, &c., being present.

The trial of Dr. Vesse, before the fourth Chamber of the Berlin Tribunal, has terminated in his condemnation to six months' imprisonment. The court has, moreover, ordered the suppression of the pages 49 and 50 of the third volume of the "History of the small German Courts," which contained the calumny on Duke William of Mecklenburg. The condemned has renounced all appeal, and has commenced undergoing his sentence.

RUSSIA.

THE Prince Auguste de Wurtemberg arrived at St. Petersburg on the 18th ult.

Advices from St. Petersburg state, that an Imperial ukase decrees the issue of ten new series of notes, each series amounting to 3,000,000 silver roubles, and the renewal of the eight series already in circulation; altogether, 54,000,000.

General Gortschakoff arrived at St. Petersburg on the 24th ult. Captain de Rauch has delivered to the Emperor Alexander an autograph letter from the King of Prussia.

The Berlin *Kreuz Zeitung* affirms, that the plan of sending the young Grand Duke Nicholas as Viceroy to Poland, has not been completely abandoned at St. Petersburg. General Prince Gortschakoff would act *ad litem* of the young Prince, as Chief Commander of the military forces.

DENMARK.

THE King'smorganatic wife, the Countess of Danner, has not been raised, as was expected, to the rank of duchess. There was a report that the Countess would be proclaimed Queen, but the late rescript of the King announcing his marriage with the Countess as morganatic "for the present and for future" would seem to set that question at rest.

SWEDEN.

THE War Department has drawn from the Treasury 1,100,000 francs, to be applied to the urgent defence of the kingdom.

SARDINIA.

THE King of Sardinia returned to Turin on the 24th ult., to hold, it was said, important conferences with his ministers respecting the peace negotiations.

The Italian papers say that the Government of Piedmont has sent notes to London and Paris, expressing its views with regard to the propositions for peace.

In Piedmont, the rumour gains ground of an approaching marriage between King Victor Emmanuel and the Princess Marie Charlotte, daughter of Leopold, King of the Belgians. The princess was born on June 7, 1840.

An important law relative to the organisation of the department of Public Instruction is now before the Piedmontese Senate.

ITALY.

The Governments of Modena and Parma have just issued decrees prohibiting the exportation of horses to all countries not in their custom-house league—that is, to all countries except to each other, or the Austrian territories.

The "Giornale di Roma" of the 23rd ult. announces that the Pope has ordered the extension of the existing telegraphic lines of Rome to Civita Vecchia, Perugia, and Foligno.

TURKEY.

THE *Corriere Italiano* learns from Galatz that the following plan for the future organisation of the Danubian Principalities has been presented to Aali Pacha by Lord Stratford:—

1. The two Principalities to form one state, under the *souveraineté* of the Sultan. 2. The Prince to be elected for life. The sovereign dignity to be hereditary in his family. 3. The Prince to be a native. 4. The new State to pay tribute to the Porte. The amount of the same to be settled after the election of the Prince. 5. The new State to have two Houses of Parliament. 6. A national army to be formed. 7. The Porte will continue not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Principalities. Baron Proketchel has notified to the Porte the acceptance by Russia of the Austrian proposals.

Accounts from Constantinople state that, notwithstanding pacific appearances, General Shirley has sent orders to Schumla to prepare quarters for troops who are to be dispatched thither in the spring.

PERSIA.

Our Government regard their quarrel with Mr. Murray as one so purely political that the official "Gazette" of Teheran lately stated, although the British Ambassador had thought fit to haul down his flag and leave the country, the relations between the two Governments were not at all affected. It is believed that the mediation of the Turkish Government has been sought, and that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe has been consulted with a view of bringing this ridiculous affair to an amicable termination.

UNITED STATES.

A CORRESPONDENT of one of the London journals, writing from New York on January 15, says, that from sources of information which I have always found worthy of confidence, I have learned that the steamer Arago, which sailed last Saturday, took out to Mr. Buchanan, the American Minister, instructions which will result in the immediate recall of Mr. Crampton by his Government, or his dismissal by our own. If these instructions were not sent by the Arago on Saturday, they will go by the Canada to-day.

The same correspondent assures us that it is a fact "that nobody on this side of the water has any confidence in Lord Palmerston's desire to maintain friendly relations with the United States. He cannot, it is true, be accused of ever having made many professions of regard or friendship for us. His policy, so far as he may be considered as having had a policy, has never been one of conciliation towards the United States. There is but one opinion on this subject among our public men. The archives of our department of state show it. Lord Palmerston's speeches, despatches, and letters show it. His friends know it. It is also believed in the best informed circles here and in Europe that these sentiments of quasi-hostility against the United States have been strengthened by the Anglo-French alliance."

The assembled wisdom of the country is still without a Speaker, and there yet any appearance of a giving way on either side. The Senate, tired of waiting (especially as there are many presidential candidates among its members), have made up their minds to begin business by a grand debate on the foreign relations.

INDIA.

The following brief summary of political intelligence is extracted from the "Bombay Times" of Jan. 2:—

"The Santal insurrection may be said to be suppressed. Tranquillity prevails throughout our dominions, and we have not for some months had a single disturbance even on the Punjab frontier. The kingdom of Oude is about to be sequestered; the King to be allowed £100,000 a year; the army to be reduced from 80,000 to 15,000; the entire administration of affairs to be entrusted to the Resident, General Outram. The settlement of the Oudey-ore differences, which renders the political agent supreme, has dissatisfied the chiefs. The native princes, whose administration is admitted to be hopeless, are endeavouring to obtain some better security than they have hitherto enjoyed for the retention of their dominions."

"The charges of the Indian navy are about to be increased from half to three-quarters of a million sterling annually, one-fourth the revenue of the Presidency, two-thirds the charges of our army of 60,000 men."

"Lord Canning is expected at the Presidency, on his way to Calcutta, a fortnight hence; the present Governor-General retires on the 1st of March, after an administration of eight years' duration."

"A fair business has been done in the import market; money is scarce, and exchange has advanced."

CHINA.

We give the following from the "Overland Friend" of China, dated Dec. 15:—

"At Canton there has been another extensive fire, singularly, again on the site of the fire in 1852. There are now three large spaces in the vicinity of the factories caused by fires within the last twelve months. We believe the whole of these fires have been the work of incendiaries."

"Trade in Canton in old teas during the month has been brisker than it has been for some time. Of new teas but few have been brought to market, and operations have been limited."

"The failure of several Chinese shroffs at Shanghai, followed by the suspension of Messrs. Aspinwall, Mackenzie, and Co., with liabilities, it is said, exceeding £150,000, have caused something like a panic in that quarter."

AUSTRALIA.

The Melbourne papers, of November 2nd, inform us that rich veins of quartz had been discovered about twenty miles from Geelong. An assay by crushing and amalgamation gave at the rate of 880 ounces to the ton. There was a great rush of miners to the spot.

Several failures had taken place in Sydney, which created considerable want of confidence in monetary circles, and especially in the joint-stock banks, on which a run had been made, although to a small extent. Other failures were anticipated, but it is supposed the crisis had passed.

The papers contain accounts of considerable rioting and robbery, and are directing attention to the insecurity of life and property in consequence of the number and ferocity of outlaws at large throughout the country.

A severe shock of an earthquake was felt at Taranaki on the 22nd of October, by which several buildings were destroyed.

The War.

OPERATIONS IN THE CRIMEA.

THE FURTHER DEMOLITION OF THE DOCKS.

CAMP BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, Jan. 14.—The demolition of the docks proceeds. On Saturday the side of one was blown in. There were 11 mines, and 8,000 lb. of powder were employed. At about half-past 1 o'clock the fuse was lighted, and the engineer officers ascended the high ground in rear of the docks to await the explosion. Owing to the mistake of a subordinate officer in charge of the wires, three of the mines were let off prematurely. Five minutes elapsed, and then the others exploded, not all of them quite simultaneously, but in very rapid succession. The effect was most satisfactory. To reconstruct what was overthrown would give more trouble than to build a new dock, for the removal of the ponderous rubbish would of itself be an Herculean labour. The quantity of powder used would suggest the idea of a prodigious explosion, fragments flying high into the air, and strewing the land around; but it must be remembered that the force of these mines is directed laterally, and its first apparent effect disappoints expectation. It is only when the smoke clears away, and one beholds the huge masses of granite that have been riven from their beds, that one forms a just idea of the power applied. At the moment of the explosion, however, some blocks of very respectable size were seen flying through the air, in a direction, fortunately, where their fall was innocuous. Amid and within the gray smoke a dust-cloud appeared. There was a tremulous motion of the ground, and some stones fell off the dockyard wall. The engineer officers were highly satisfied with the effect produced. Few spectators were there, for it is never shown beforehand, with any degree of certainty, when these explosions are to take place. A few French officers were present, some of them with a photographic apparatus, to catch the effect of the explosion. The Russian batteries were silent. Shortly after the explosion a few shots were fired, but they were chiefly directed at the French part of the town. For the last few days the Russian fire has been very slack. They have probably found out that they merely wasted their powder and shot.

AN ATTACK ANTICIPATED.

Jan. 15.—During the last three or four days the camps on the extreme right have been on the alert, in the expectation of an attack from the enemy. Rumour fixed upon the 12th instant, the Russian New Year's day, as the probable date of this event. Nothing more than usual transpired, however, nor did observation of the enemy's position indicate any signs of movement. In the course of the morning of the 12th, General Codrington rode over towards Inkermann to reconnoitre, attended by two of his staff and, as usual, a single orderly dragoon. The limited number of his escort forms

a striking contrast with the brilliant cavalcade which generally announces the approach of Marshal Polissier, or even with the escort which ordinarily accompanies a French general commanding a corps d'armée or division.

THE WEATHER.—HEALTH OF THE TROOPS.

There has been a sudden change in the weather. On the 14th the temperature continued very low all day, and, being accompanied with a strong wind from the north, the cold was felt very severely. Snow found its way through every crack and crevice of the wooden buildings, and every precaution was necessary in the open air to prevent frostbite. The troops everywhere appear very healthy and vigorous, notwithstanding these sudden variations of climate. Some of the French troops in the plain are reported to be suffering from a form of scorbutic disease.

ENGLISH AND FRENCH SPORTSMEN AND RUSSIAN SHARPSHOOTERS.

A few days ago a French officer, wandering too near the Tchernaya river in pursuit of game, was shot dead by a Russian sharpshooter. Two English officers, who had managed to get in front of the French sentries in the same valley, had a narrow escape of a similar fate the day before yesterday. They were wandering on, and had got some distance in advance towards the position of the Russian sentries. A French sentry, who had called in vain, at last hit upon the expedient of discharging his musket to attract their attention, and fired over their heads. This roused them quickly enough, and on looking around they discovered a group of three or four Russians partly concealed, and apparently awaiting their nearer approach, among some rushes at the opposite edge of the river. They at once turned back toward the French lines, and regained them, not without some risk, for the Russian shots grooved up the ground about them near enough to prove the necessity of the sentry's warning. The Russian sharpshooters line the whole length of the Tchernaya on the north side, and omit no opportunity of firing a shot at a casual straggler.

CHANGES IN THE LAND TRANSPORT CORPS.

A very important change has been made in the constitution of the Land Transport Corps. The sections of the corps which have hitherto been designated divisions, and have been under the command and direction of "captains of division," subject to the control of the Director-General of the Land Transport, are in future to be regiments—each under the command of a field officer, and subject to the orders of the general of the division of the army to which it may happen to be attached. There can be no doubt but that this arrangement will lead to stricter discipline among the men, better security of public property, and facilitate the necessary arrangements in case of one or two divisions being detached from the main body of the army.

RUMOURS OF AN ATTACK AT KERTCH—AMUSEMENTS.

It was reported at Kertch that Lord Panmure had sent General Vivian information of an intended attack. Be that as it may, it is believed that an attack is hardly possible now that the thaw has come, for the Russians could not move their artillery. The lines and fortifications of Kertch advance rapidly towards completion, and are represented to be very strong, and to afford an abundant guarantee against the success of an attack upon the place. At Yenikale the English officers were struggling against the weariness of winter quarters. Private theatricals were getting up, and coursing was the fashionable sport of the day. Hares were at first very numerous, but their numbers were diminishing, owing to English greyhounds and Tartar guns, and a hare was worth 5s. in the Kertch market.

THE RUPTURE WITH PERSIA.

A LETTER, signed "Verex," in the "Times" of Wednesday last states the grounds of the difference between our embassy at Teheran and the Persian Government. The writer appears to be intimately acquainted with the facts connected with the rupture.

"Mirza Hashim had been a Persian employé. On Mr. Murray's arrival he was under the protection of the British Mission. The Mirza was, however, an object of the most intense hatred to the Sadr (or Prime Minister). The British Minister, bound to protect the Mirza, yet anxious to conciliate the Sadr, endeavoured to accomplish both purposes by removing the Mirza to an agency at Shiraz, and notified the same officially to the Sadr. This latter, seeing his enemy likely to escape beyond the reach of his immediate vengeance, intimated to Mr. Murray that he claimed Mirza Hashim as a Persian employé, and that if he attempted to leave the Mission he would be seized and detained. As the British Minister was aware of the falseness of the claim made by the Sadr, and of the malicious feelings which prompted it, he insisted upon making the appointment. The Sadr then seized Mirza's wife, and endeavoured by threats to induce her to divorce her husband; the latter having, according to Moslem law, absolute control over his wife, claimed her restoration, which was refused. As the sanctity of British protection was violated by the seizure of Mirza's wife, Mr. Murray demanded her liberation, and was equally refused. The Sadr, not content with this gratuitous insult, went still further, and spread reports of Mr. Murray's having a very close and personal interest in the liberation of Mirza's wife, and had the audacity to allude to the reports publicly. If any confusion of the calumny were needed, it might be found in its absurdity; inasmuch as the lady in question is the wife of a third husband, by whose appointment to Shiraz she would be removed nearly 1,000 miles from the British Mission. Thus publicly insulted, and the protection of the Mission flagrantly violated, Mr. Murray had no alternative left but to insist upon the liberation of the Mirza's wife, and an immediate retraction of the vile calumny which the Sadr had spread, or to strike his flag. As Persia refused the former, British honour compelled him to adopt the latter. The writer intimates that Mr. Murray has an intimate knowledge of Eastern character and language."

THE APPROACHING CONFERENCES.

THE PLACE OF MEETING AND THE REPRESENTATIVES.

The terms of the declaration of Russia, accepting the Russian conditions appear to have arrived officially at Vienna on the 23rd ult., and to have been found "satisfactory on all points." From thence the document was sent to Paris and London, and the impression produced is said to be not less favourable. The necessary authority to sign the protocol was sent to M. de Bourquency and Sir Hamilton Seymour, and the conferences will probably open in the course of about three weeks. This delay is necessary, if for no other reason, in order to allow of the participation of a Turkish envoy in the deliberations.

Paris has been fixed upon, and Lords Clarendon and Cowley will represent Great Britain, and Count Walewski, assisted probably by M. de Bourquency, our ally. M. Messimo d'Azeglio, it is said, will represent Sardinia at the conferences. The Russian representatives are not officially announced, and it does not appear certain whether the first envoy will be M. Titoff or Baron Brunow; and with regard to Austria, Count Bnol, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is up to this time the only choice which seems certain, M. Hubner being as much spoken of as the Count de Rechberg for the second plenipotentiary.

THE EXCLUSION OF PRUSSIA.

We believe we shall be completely borne out by the result, when emphatically we declare that Prussia will not be admitted to the conferences; and, whatever may be the impression at Berlin on the subject, it is not true that France has withdrawn her opposition, nor that the British Cabinet alone raise obstacles.

The belligerents only, with Austria as the mediating power, can take part in the conferences which are about to open at Paris. Prussia having chosen to take no part in the war, and having no recognised status as a mediator, must be content to see the other powers of Europe ignore an influence which she has allowed to lie dormant, good offices which she has never exercised, and a position in Europe as a first-rate power which Prussia herself has voluntarily abandoned.

It is not unlikely that, if a Treaty of Peace be concluded, that then Prussia may be invited to give her signature to a document of such European importance, but in its framing she can take no part.

RUSSIAN ACCEPTANCE OF THE AUSTRIAN PROPOSALS.

The following is a translation of the circular issued by the Russian Government to its diplomatic agents, in which it announces the acceptance of the Austrian proposals. This document is dated St. Petersburg, Jan. 19:—

"Public opinion in Europe has been strongly excited by the intelligence that propositions of peace concerted between the Allied Powers and Austria had been transmitted to St. Petersburg through the intervention of the Cabinet of Vienna."

"Already the Imperial Cabinet, upon its side, had made a step in the path of conciliation, by pointing out, in a despatch bearing date the 11th (23rd) of December, published in all the foreign journals, the sacrifices which it was prepared to make, with a view to the restoration of peace."

"This twofold proceeding proved the existence on either side of a desire to profit by the compulsory cessation imposed by the rigour of the season on the military operations, in order to respond to the unanimous wishes which were everywhere manifested in favour of a speedy peace."

"In the despatch cited above, the Imperial Government had taken for basis the four points of guarantee admitted by the conferences at Vienna, and had proposed, with regard to the third point—which had alone led to the rupture of the conferences—a solution which differed rather in form than in substance from the one put forward at that epoch by the Allied Powers."

"The propositions transmitted to-day by the Austrian Government, speak of the same fundamental proposition—that is to say, the neutralization of the Black Sea by a direct treaty between Russia and the Porte, to regulate by common agreement the number of ships of war which each of the adjacent powers reserves the right of maintaining for the security of its coasts. They only differ appreciably from those contained in the despatch of the 11th (23rd) of December by the proposal for rectifying the frontier between Moldavia and Bessarabia, in exchange for the places on the Russian territory in the actual occupation of the enemy."

"This is not the place to inquire if these propositions unite the conditions necessary for insuring the repose of the East and the security of Europe, rather than those of the Russian Government. It is sufficient here to establish the point, that at last an agreement has been actually arrived at on many of the fundamental bases for peace."

"Due regard being had to this agreement, to the wishes manifested by the whole of Europe, and to the existence of a coalition the tendency of which was every day to assume larger proportions, and considering the sacrifices which a protraction of the war imposes upon Russia, the Imperial Government has deemed it its duty not to delay by accessory discussions a work the success of which would respond to its heartfelt wishes."

"It has, in consequence, just given its adhesion to the propositions transmitted by the Austrian Government as a project of preliminaries for negotiations for peace."

"By the energy of its attitude in the face of a formidable coalition, Russia has given a measure of the sacrifices which she is prepared to make to defend her honour and dignity; by this act of moderation, the Imperial Government gives at the same time a new proof of its sincere desire to arrest the effusion of blood, to conclude a struggle so grievous to civilization and humanity, and to restore to Russia and to Europe the blessings of peace."

"It has a right to expect that the opinion of all civilized nations will appreciate the act."

CAPTAIN H. J. CODRINGTON, C.B., late of the Royal George, 102, in the Baltic, has been appointed additional captain of the Victory, for the organisation of the division of gun boats for the ensuing campaign.

THE COUNCIL OF WAR.—The "Journal de Havre," which has published some absurd statements respecting the recent Council of War held at Paris, such as, that the members of it were all dressed in plain clothes, and held their sittings around small circular tables, has received a second warning for spreading false news in regard to this event. A third offence will result in the suppression of the paper, and in the fine and imprisonment of the Editor.—Telegraph de Dieppe.

THE FRENCH POST IN THE VALLEY OF BAIDAR.

WHILE peace appears probable, and we are without tidings of battles won or fortresses taken, minor matters connected with the war in the Crimea naturally assume an interest not of course accorded to them in seasons more stirring, and at periods fruitful of great events.

We learn, from the latest intelligence, that there had been frequent rumours of a Russian attack, and that on Sunday, the 6th of January, the troops were under arms before daybreak. No enemy, however, appeared, and they returned to their quarters, but were disturbed and turned out, while church service was performing, by the appearance of the Cossacks, who hover about the neighbourhood, burning what little there remains to destroy. Under such circumstances, the French post in the celebrated Valley of Baidar, represented in the accompanying engraving, must exercise singular vigilance, and remain always prepared for a sharp skirmish. The gallant soldiers of France, who appear in this illustration, are certainly not likely to be taken by surprise; and it is not difficult to imagine them, in case of an assault, driving back their barbarous foes in confusion and dismay.

REMINISCENCES OF THE CAMP BEFORE SEBASTOPOL.

NO II.—THE ZOUAVES' THEATRE.

WHEN we received the accompanying sketch of the Zouaves' Theatre at Inkermann from our artist, he furnished us with a few particulars of his visit to this favourite place of public amusement in the Crimea. He tells us that the theatre is situated on the Inkermann heights, and that he started thither in company with Captain Webb, of the English commissariat. "One evening last August, we reached there," he proceeds, "about eight o'clock, and having left our horses with the servant outside, entered through the gate in the wall by which it is entered. The seats are all in the open air; as for cushions, there were none, and many of the audience had to repose themselves on the hard ground. You will see, however, how all this was managed by referring to the sketch itself. The theatre appeared picturesque enough in every detail. It is fixed in the midst of the Zouave camp, and every one of the performers are genuine Zouaves. The orchestra was composed of the brass band of the regiment, and the instrumentalists were ranged in regular order, forming a double row in front of the stage, for all the world as though the locality were the Boulevard Montmartre, instead of the rocky heights of the world-renowned Inkermann. Nevertheless, despite the attention paid to the regular theatrical forms, these ruddy-faced gentry assumed the most easy, careless sort of postures, most amusing to witness. The variety of their physiognomies was a study for a disciple of Lavater—their light-coloured dresses, rendered more brilliant by the glare of the neighbouring foot-lights, was a study of colour for an observant artist. All along the walls were crowds of private soldiers belonging to the different regiments, some sitting, some standing, but all packed as close together as they could possibly cram. To make the resemblance to the genuine French theatre the more complete, on each side was placed the usual sentry. The pit, which was reserved for officers only, was tolerably well filled."

"General Bosquet, who takes an especial interest in these performances, has paid a visit to several of them, and could not fail to have been entertained. The acting is capital. Most of it was comic. Some of the dialogue, though, was hardly adapted to polite ears. Captain Webb, who is a great favourite with the French soldiers generally, was on friendly terms with the manager. It seems that he had lent to a Zouave officer one of his 'revolvers.' A day or two afterwards the attack on the Mamelon took place, and this poor officer was killed. The 'revolver' was found among his effects, and was brought back to Captain Webb by the manager of the theatre, and hence an acquaintance was scraped up between them. At the conclusion of the performance, we were invited behind the scenes, when we partook of a social glass with the 'stars' of the theatre. During the representation I had noticed one of the scenes—the interior of a room, the walls of which appeared to be adorned with real framed drawings. The effects in these were so masterly that they attracted my attention, and I was curious to be introduced to the artist. From him I learnt that colours were so difficult to be prepared that he was obliged to have recourse to coloured earths, which he ground up, and with these all the scenery appears to have been painted. He further informed me that these very drawings, which had excited my admiration, were painted with gunpowder mixed with water and white chalk, dug out of the valley of Inkermann."

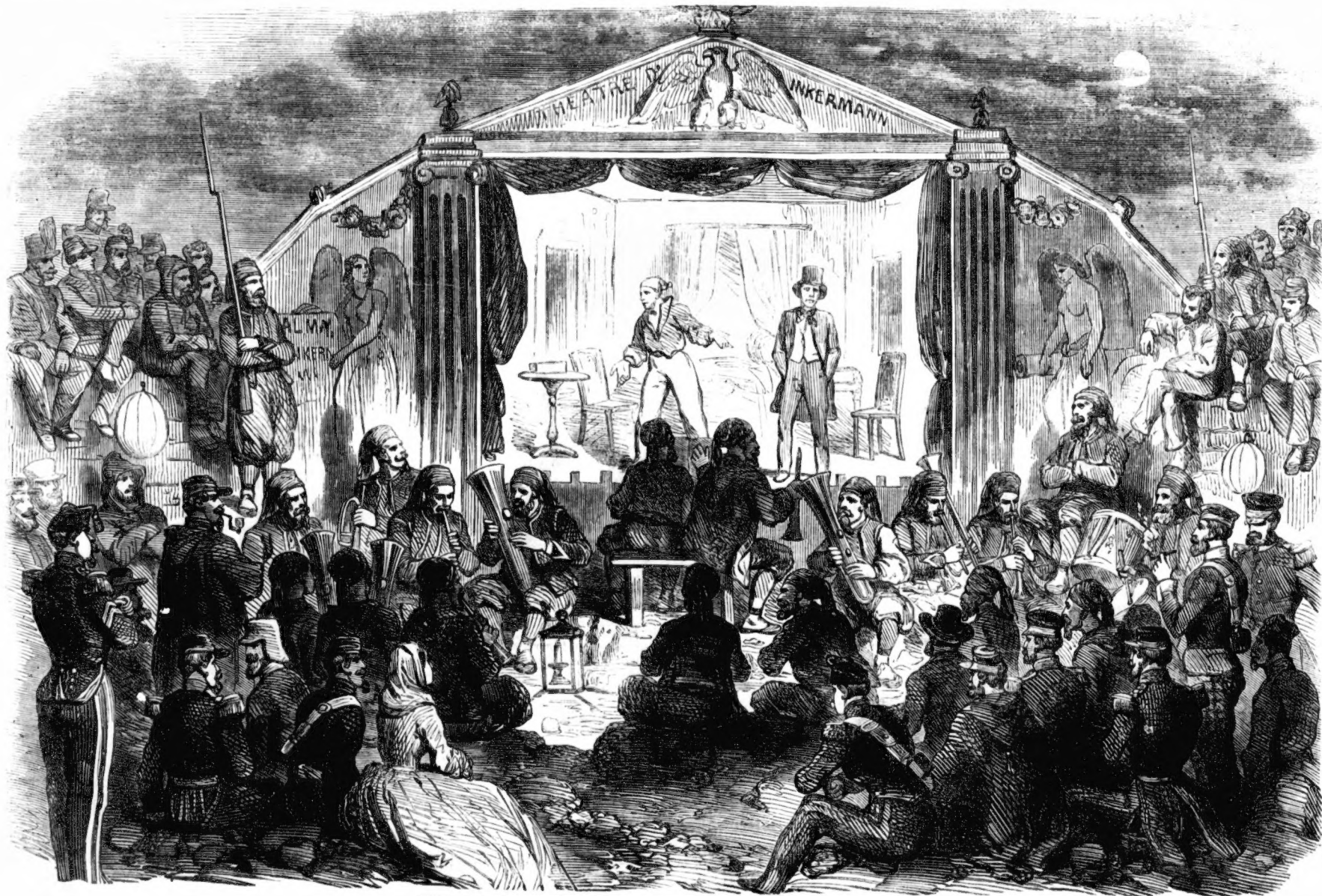


FRENCH ADVANCED POST NEAR THE VALLEY OF BAIDAR.—(DRAWN BY GUSTAVE DORÉ.)

"The Captain thought with me, that a picture painted in the camp before Sebastopol, with such materials, and by a real Zouave, would be an interesting *souvenir* to transmit home, and he arranged with the artist to come to his hut on the morrow and paint one for him. To add to the interest of this work of art, it was painted with gunpowder from the car-

tridge-boxes of dead Russian soldiers, who had been sent to their last sleep by the bullets of the Allies on the banks of the beautiful Tchernaya." There is a capital story told in connection with one of the Zouave actors, which will form a fitting pendant to our artist's description. It seems that during the desperate fighting that took place on the 7th of June,

this enthusiastic disciple of Momus, after penetrating with his comrades into the Russian works, threw himself upon a Russian officer, dashed him to the ground, and began unbuttoning his prisoner's regimentals. "I don't want to kill you," he cried, "but give me your coat—it's for the theatre!"



THE ZOUAVES' THEATRE IN THE CRIMEA.—(SKETCHED BY JULIAN FORICH.)

"A BOUQUET FOR THE EMPRESS."

The peculiarly-interesting incident depicted in the accompanying engraving, marked the occasion of the recent entrance of the Crimean troops into Paris. At the moment when the Emperor was passing in front of the Zouaves of the Guard, in the Place Vendôme, the son of the cantinière of the regiment, a boy of about seven years of age, and already wearing the Zouave uniform, drew near the Emperor and presented to him a fine bouquet of violets. His Majesty bent down from his horse, and touching the child with his hand on the cheek, he said, "Thank you, my little friend; go, and take your bouquet to the Empress," pointing to the balcony where Her Majesty was seated with her ladies, and then proceeded with his inspection. "But how am I to get to the Empress?" said the little messenger, in great embarrassment. "I will show you the way, my little man," said a deep voice near him; and the boy, looking up, perceived that it was the tall drum-major of the Zouaves who had volunteered to serve him as a guide. The tall man then took the boy gravely by the hand, and in a few minutes, thanks to the imperturbable repetition of "By order of the Emperor, a bouquet for the Empress," they soon arrived near her Majesty. The Empress accepted the flowers, embraced the little boy on each cheek, and asked him his name and those of his parents, and appeared delighted with his present. At last the child, after having been caressed and kissed by the ladies, returned with his tall comrade to the court below. It may be imagined that he was asked a thousand questions when he came down, but all his faculties seemed to be concentrated in the one fact of his interview, as his constant reply was "The Empress embraced me."

THE SPEAKER ENTERING THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

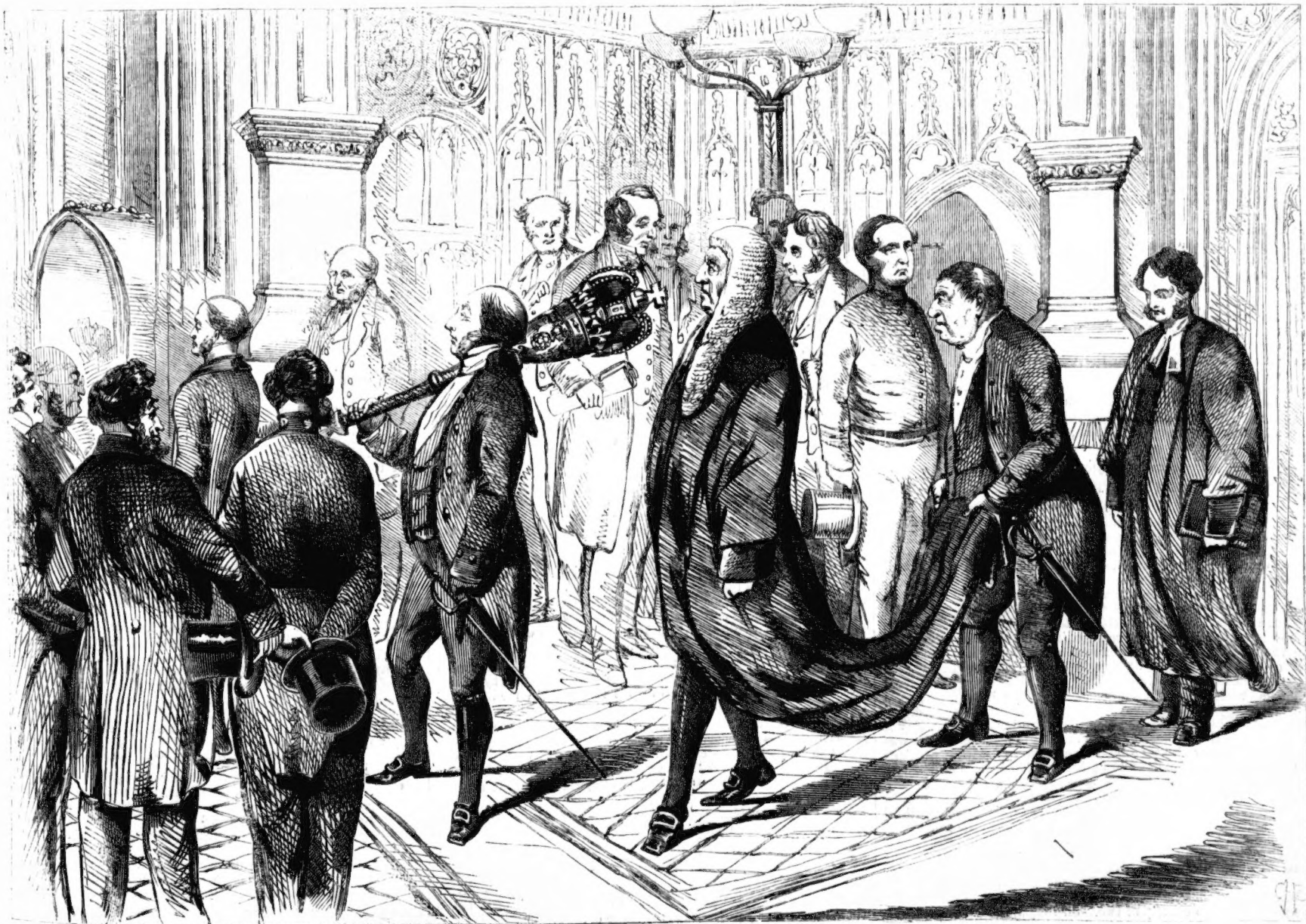
The Speaker of the House of Commons, whose entrance into the House is here depicted, is the Right Hon. Charles Shaw Lefevre, member for North Hants. He was chosen Speaker in 1839, on the retirement of Mr. Abercrombie and in opposition to Mr. Goulburn. Mr. Lefevre had 317 votes, Mr. Goulburn 299. Mr. Lefevre has been re-elected every session since without opposition, and will, in all probability, in a session or two, retire from his office with a pension and a peerage. To this reward he is most justly entitled by his long, faithful, and arduous services. Every one who has seen him, and has had opportunities of observing

his conduct in the chair, must acknowledge that he is a model Speaker. In the first place, he is really a fine-looking man; and, as president of such an assembly, that is no mean qualification. But he has higher qualities than an imposing appearance: his knowledge of all the duties

Member sat down, "the First Lord" arose to reply, and in his usual facetious manner sent back the retort courteous, and perhaps excited roars of laughter at the Hon. Member's expense. This was more than his Irish nature could bear. No sooner, therefore, did the "First Lord" resume his



"A BOUQUET FOR THE EMPRESS."



ENTRANCE OF THE SPEAKER INTO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

seat, than, boiling with rage, the Hon. Member jumps up to reply—quite forgetful that by doing so he is entirely out of order. Now commences a scene. Mr. Speaker calls out in sonorous tone, "Order, order!" and the whole House joins him in chorus. But all to no purpose. The Hon. Member for Donnybrook still persists; you cannot hear a word of what he says, but you can see by his gesticulation that he has worked himself up to such a pitch of excitement, that he would "face the devil" if required, "letting alone a Speaker." And as "Ould Ireland" has been insulted, the Hon. Member is not without his backers. And so for a few seconds the row goes on; till, at length, up rises the Speaker. "Chair, chair!" resounds from all sides of the House. And as the affair now gets serious, some friends pull down the Hon. Member into his place. The noise and uproar is succeeded by the stillness of a desert; and then Mr. Speaker, with calm dignity, and yet with the utmost suavity of manner, in tones of voice which penetrate to every part of the House, "assures the Hon. Member that he is entirely out of order; and hopes that he will see that it is for the interest of all that the rules of the House should be strictly obeyed." This is followed by loud cheers, and calls for Mr. M'Turk; who, now that his passion has subsided somewhat, expresses his sorrow that he should have been "led to infringe upon the rules of the House," &c. And the current of the debate flows all the more calmly during the evening for this turbulent episode. We must not suppose that these scenes are peculiar, as some have avowed, to our modern, and especially to the reformed Parliament. The following extract from "Verney's Notes of the Long Parliament," will show that in that famous assembly there occurred sometimes worse interruptions than any which we have to complain of now. It is copy of part of a resolution of the House:—

"That the said T. T. (who T. T. was nobody knows) in a loud and violent manner, and contrary to the custom and usage of Parliament, in the Speaker's ear, at the putting of the question about the militia, on the 3rd day of January, 1641, standing near the Speaker's chair, cried 'Baw!' to the great terror and affrightment of the Speaker, and of the Members of the House of Commons; and contrary to his duty and the trust reposed in him by his country."—"Verney's Notes of the Proceedings of the Long Parliament," p. 106.

SOMETHING ABOUT PARLIAMENTS.

PARLIAMENTS, it is probable, were originally only the Councils of the Sovereign, summoned by him on the occurrence of some emergency. Thomas Carlyle describes them in his usual quaint way; and his description is, in the main, corroborated by antiquarian research—

CARLYLE'S DESCRIPTION OF AN ANCIENT MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.

"Reading in *Eadmerus* and the dim Red Books, one finds that Parliament was at first a most simple assemblage, quite cognate to the situation. That Red William, or whoever had taken upon him the terrible task of being King of England, was wont to invite, oftentimes about Christmas-time, his subordinate kinglets, barons, as he called them, to give him the pleasure of their company for a week or two. There, in earnest conference all morning, in free talk over Christmas cheer all evening, in some big Royal Hall at Westminster, Winchester, or wherever it might be, with log fires, huge rounds of boiled and roast, not lacking malnsey and other generous liquor, they took counsel concerning the arduous matters of the kingdom. 'You, Talbot, what have you to propose in this arduous matter? Front-de-bœuf has another view; thinks, in his southern counties, they will go with the protectionist movement, and repeal the malt-tax, the African squadron, and the window-duty itself. Potdevin, what is your opinion of this measure? will it hold in your parts? So! Fitzurse disagrees then! Tete-détoupe, speak out. And first the pleasure of a glass of wine, my infant.'—"Latter Day Pamphlet."

GROWTH OF PARLIAMENT.

That which was only a council, in process of years gradually, and not without much struggling, developed itself into an independent power, not so much advising as checking the sovereign. Very early, but exactly when is not known, the Parliament was divided into "three estates of the realm," "The Lords Spiritual," "The Lords Temporal," and "The Commons." At first the three estates met in one chamber, but had separate rooms into which each estate could retire and talk over the matter in hand. At last Parliament became two distinct bodies—the Lords Spiritual and Temporal as one, and the House of Commons as the other. When these changes took place, no history records. Under the Saxons, the great council was called popularly *Witena-gemote*, or company of wise men. The word "Parliament," from *parler*, to talk, was most likely introduced by the Normans; the first recorded use of it is in a statute dated 1272.

MODERN THEORY OF PARLIAMENTS.

The modern theory of Parliaments, which, like all theories, was deduced from the practice, is, that each House should check the other, and that both should check the power of the Crown; but of late years this theory has been outgrown, for the rapid development of democracy has given to the third branch of the Legislature almost the entire power of the government. The House of Lords is but a very slight check now upon the House of Commons, doing but little more than registering its acts; and though the Crown still holds nominally its ancient privilege of presiding over and managing the executive, making war and peace, and carrying on all foreign relations; yet, as the Crown now never acts but through its Ministers, and they, in fact, though not in theory, are chosen by and responsible to the Commons, it follows then, that the third branch of the Legislature has usurped all the powers of the other two; and the Government is, in effect, more democratic than many of the ancient republics were. The power of Parliament is enormous. It can change the succession to the Crown, alter the constitution, alienate property, and take away life; in fine, its power is only limited by that which limits all sovereign authority—the power of resistance on the part of those whom it governs.

This, then, is the legislative body which has just assembled, and whose deeds we shall now have to chronicle from week to week.

INNER LIFE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

APPEARANCE OF THE HOUSE THE FIRST DAY OF THE SESSION.

HERE we are, then, once more, in the old place, with note-book in hand—a "special correspondent"—prepared to jot down whatever may occur in the parliamentary campaign likely to interest our readers. There seems to be no particular change in the House itself; everything looks brighter than it did, which we suppose is merely the result of cleaning. We noticed in passing through the outer lobby that there the process of cleaning had been carried on very zealously, and with great effect. In the division lobbies a change has been made not for the better. Last session these handsome lobbies were lighted by wax candles, in candelabra on pedestals; now they are lighted by gas chandeliers hanging from the ceiling; and, as these chandeliers destroy the effect of the beautiful carved oak-panelled ceiling, and are, moreover, in themselves excessively ugly, the change is not an improvement. There is, we perceive, a new face at the table; Mr. Wm. Ley, clerk-assistant, has retired, and Mr. Thomas Erskine May has been appointed instead. Mr. May is well known as the author of "The Practice of Parliament." He was first in the library; he then became examiner of private petitions and taxing-master, which office he held until he was promoted to his present post. The appointment is generally considered to be a good one—the right man in the right place.

The House is filling. Lord Palmerston is as spry and youthful as ever; Time seems to make no impression upon the noble premier; nobody, to look at him, would think that he had the weight of a mighty empire upon his shoulders. Sir George Grey is pale, as usual, but, notwithstanding his accident, is evidently the better for his holidays. Sir Charles Wood looks the same as he did last session, excepting that he is embrowned by exposure to the sun; he has probably had a sea trip or two. Sir Benjamin Hall's immovable

countenance has undergone no change; indeed all the Ministers appear to be ready for the campaign, and Mr. Hayter is already flourishing his whip with his accustomed vigour. But here comes the Speaker. (See page 69.)

Of new members, there will be the usual number of thirteen:—

Mr. Rush.....	for Hunts	vice Lord Mandeville, now Duke of Manch.
Sir Chas. Napier ..	Southwark ..	Sir William Molesworth, deceased.
Captain Jolliffe ..	Wells	Mr. Tudevay
Lord Gifford	Totness	Lord Seymour, now Duke of Somerset.
Mr. McEvoy	Meath	Mr. Lucas
Mr. Bond	Armagh	Mr. Ross Moore
.....	Tamworth ..	Capt. Townsend, now Lord Townsend.
.....	Hereford ..	Sir Robert Price
.....	Rochester ..	Hon. Francis Villiers ..
Major Sibthorp....	Lincoln	Colonel Sibthorp
.....	Camb. Univ. ..	Mr. Goulburn
.....	Edinburgh ..	Mr. Macaulay
.....	Newcastle ..	Mr. Blackett

SIR E. LYONS ON THE CRIMEAN BATTLES.

On Monday Sir E. Lyons was presented with a public address by the inhabitants of Christchurch, Hampshire, where he was born in 1799. The day was singularly auspicious, the neighbouring gentry for miles round were attracted to the scene, and the town presented an almost endless series of banners and triumphal arches. The gallant Admiral, being afterwards entertained at a banquet where Lord Mahnesbury presided, said:—

"We saw from the decks of our ships the battle of the Alma. General Bosquet, with the French division, passed almost within hail of the *Agamemnon*, and anything finer than his attack on the enemy's lines could scarcely be conceived. We saw the British army ford the Alma, and form on the opposite bank under cover of the artillery, which, on that occasion, as on all others, peculiarly distinguished themselves throughout the Crimean campaign. We saw them also capture the position of the enemy, which the Russians thought impossible to be carried by any troops in the world. We saw them advance to the attack, and so striking was that movement that General Canrobert, at that time second in command of the French army, told me afterwards that he could only compare it to an English red brick wall supernaturally lifted up from the ground and propelled forward, so steady, so unwavering, and so irresistible was that attack. I saw, likewise, the charge at Balaklava, and, however that may be criticised in a strategic point of view, I believe that it will go down to history as one of the finest and most brilliant cavalry charges that was ever made since the world began. No man could have seen that chivalrous action, as I did, without feeling proud of his country and grateful to the gallant band who engaged in it. At the battle of Inkermann, again, I had a still closer view of that memorable conflict. On that day great and heroic deeds were performed. Each man in the French and English army fought as if the fate of the battle and the honour of the Allies depended on his own individual exertions; and great and glorious were the results; and I should think of it to the end of my days with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction, did there not come with it the alloy of the battle-field; but that is the natural and inseparable concomitant of war. We saw, too, from the decks of our ships the final attack on Sebastopol, in which, however, a violent gale of wind prevented us taking part. We saw all the alternations of the struggle of three hours which terminated so triumphantly for the Allies. We saw the French rush out from their trenches into the Malakoff. We saw also their attack on the Little Redan, where, after performing prodigies of valour, they were unable to maintain a position. The attack on the Great Redan was, to some extent, concealed from our view by the intervening hills, but I am well acquainted with the position and the circumstances of the attack; and here I may, perhaps, be permitted to say, in reference to it, that while our brave Allies, the French, favoured by the nature of the ground, and protected by the fire of the English batteries, were enabled to carry their sap within 30 or 40 yards of the Malakoff, it was not so with our troops. Every step they took was enfiladed by the enemy's batteries, and they were unable to approach nearer than from 220 to 240 yards of the Great Redan. Nevertheless our troops, when called upon, rushed out of the trenches to the attack, and although decimated, and more than decimated, in their passage across the intervening ground, they succeeded in effecting a lodgment in the battery, and would probably have retained it, but they found that, unlike the Malakoff, which was enclosed all round, the Redan was open in the rear; and thus the enemy were enabled to pour in an overwhelming body of troops, and so to recover the position as often as it was wrested from them. There is another circumstance, also, which is not generally known, but of the truth of which I assured myself by asking General Niel the other day in Paris. When the French made their unsuccessful attack on the 18th of June, it was discovered afterwards that they had only spiked the enemy's guns imperfectly, which, in their retreat, was unavoidably turned upon our Allies. A more positive order on this subject was subsequently issued, and on the 8th of September all the guns in the Malakoff were too effectually spiked, and thus useless to repel the advancing of the enemy's hordes from the rear of the Redan. It was utterly impossible to withstand the overpowering numbers that rushed in; but I glory in being able to say, that never was British courage more conspicuously displayed than on that day. The example of the gallant Welsford, who fell gloriously in the action, and of the brave Handcock, who was killed at the head of his corps, will never be forgotten; still less that of General Windham, who, amid a shower of bullets, and as if he had a charmed life, stood unscathed upon the ramparts, urging on his men to the attack. I have spoken hitherto of the horrors and glories of war. I would now venture to mention an episode in the last campaign, of a new character, that will come home to the hearts of all persons residing in Hampshire and this immediate neighbourhood with peculiar interest—I speak of the benevolent acts of Miss Nightingale, and of the ladies with whom she has been associated in her work of mercy in the East. I speak with knowledge of the facts, when I tell you that it has fallen to the lot of but few women to do the good that they have done. To dilate on those acts would be superfluous; no tongue can do justice to them; but I trust they are registered in Heaven, as I know they are engraven on the hearts of thousands of their countrymen." (Loud cheers.)

[Next week we shall give further particulars of Sir E. Lyons' visit to Christchurch, and engravings illustrating the most interesting scenes therewith connected.—Ed.]

MURDER ON THE HIGH SEAS.—One of the most singular incidents connected with the annals of crime was brought to light on Friday last week on the arrival at Liverpool of the ship *Owen Williams*, from the African coast. It appears that a few days before her arrival, one of the hands, John Simmonds, a Manilla boy, had been guilty of some act of insubordination or theft, and to escape punishment he took to the rigging, carrying with him a marlin-spike. He was summoned to descend, and on refusing to do so, a seaman was sent after him. After chasing him about the yards and shrouds for some time, he was on the point of effecting his capture, when the lad turned sharply round, and struck him a violent blow on the head. The man fell upon the deck a corpse. The young ruffian was again summoned to surrender himself, but he persisted in maintaining his elevated position, where he remained the whole of the night. On the following morning, several blank cartridges were fired at him, to intimidate him into descending, but these not having the desired effect, a loaded pistol was next fired, and the ball taking effect, the lad came tumbling down the rigging. The wound caused by the shot was not of very serious moment, but in the fall his collar-bone was broken, and he sustained several severe contusions. On the vessel's arrival in the Mersey he was conveyed to the Northern Hospital, where he will remain until sufficiently recovered to be handed over to the police authorities.

THE QUEEN'S PRESENT TO WOUNDED SOLDIERS.—The Queen has again sought to lighten the monotony of hospital routine, by sending several copies of appropriate songs for the amusement of the inmates of the General Hospital, Fort Pitt.

CAMP ON SOUTHEA COMMON.—It is in contemplation to establish a camp on Southea Common. The number of men to be encamped is reported to be 1,600. The camp will be of canvas, and not a permanent one. It is obvious that Southea Common possesses peculiar advantages in respect to the encampment of a body of men, whether they be designed for foreign service or for garrison duty.

DINNER TO THE METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS.—On Wednesday evening last, the Lord Mayor inaugurated his year of office with a splendid banquet to the members of the Metropolitan Board of Works, of which body the majority of members were present, under the presidency of their chairman, Mr. Thwaites. Covers were laid in the Egyptian Hall for 120, and every seat was occupied. A novelty in the arrangements was the presence of the Crystal Palace band, by whom a selection of first-class music was admirably performed in the course of the evening.

A MEMOIR OF INSPECTOR FIELD.

[THE following memoir of Inspector Field, who is now occupying so large a share of public attention, has been kindly furnished us by one of his most intimate friends. A further account of Inspector Field, in connection with his investigations at Rugeley, will be found, accompanying his portrait on another page. Owing to a temporary reliance on the statements of some of our daily contemporaries, we were induced last week to publish some remarks on Inspector Field's conduct in the affair of the insurance company and Walter Palmer, which we now find to have been contrary to the facts; for it appears that, so far from Inspector Field having kept the information he obtained respecting the murder of Walter Palmer secret—as he has been accused of doing by several journals, in common with ourselves—he not only plainly told the insurance office they were bound to prosecute, but desired Mr. Gover to write immediately to the Secretary of State on the subject. Either Mr. Gover neglected to perform his duty, or the Secretary of State was grossly remiss in the exercise of his functions. If the information had been acted upon, the life of Cook would, in all probability, have been spared.]

Mr. Field was born at Chelsea, in the year 1805; so that he is at present in his 51st year. His father was a respectable innkeeper, living in the same suburb, and one of the earliest promoters of the Licensed Victuallers' School. In the year 1820, Mr. Field, not having made up his mind as to what stage he would travel by through life, was induced to become an amateur theatrical, and performed some of the leading characters at the Catherine Street Theatre, Gray's Inn Road, and other numerous unlicensed places devoted to the followers of Thespis. The stage was then, as it is now, not very profitable to embark in as a profession; and money being a commodity duly valued by Mr. Field, it became essentially necessary to him that some course should be struck out for future advancement. Sir Robert Peel presented to Mr. Field this new feature in the shape of the Metropolitan Police Bill, which was established by her Majesty's Government in 1829. Mr. Field, without much difficulty, obtained a sergeant's birth in the E division, and did duty for the first time in High Street, St. Giles's, or one of those "raw and gusty eves" in November, "whereon the very wind did grieve." It was a cheerless and bitter night when the chief of the detective police of the metropolis of England made his first essay with a staff. An Irish row occurred in the neighbourhood of those fearful sinks of villany and iniquity called Buckeridge Street and Rats' Castle, which ended in the capture of a notorious highway robber; and thus, on his first night, he was enabled to make his "first charge." Fortune, fickle creature, smiled on Field, and ever since has continued to pour down upon him her bounteous gifts. Promotion in the police, in 1829, was very rapid. Mr. Field soon got transferred to the L division (Lambeth) as inspector, where he remained for many years; he was then removed to Deptford Dockyard as an inspector in the E division; from thence he went to Woolwich, where he organized the police in the Government Yard, and after the retirement of Inspector Shackell, was appointed, on the recommendation of Superintendent May, chief of the Detective Police of the A division at Scotland Yard. This situation Mr. Field filled for a considerable period, actively engaged in various important matters connected with the Government and the public. In 1852, he retired after 23 years' service, on a handsome superannuation allowance, and a first-class certificate of good character, and a medal from the Commissioners of the Royal Exhibition in Hyde Park. Mr. Field, during his career in the Detective office, was appointed to watch the proceedings of the Chartists in London and Birmingham, to which latter place he repaired by order of the Commissioners for the purpose of capturing some of the ring-leaders and searching for arms. On Mr. Field's arrival in the latter town with Inspector Jenkins, it became necessary that a turbulent leader of the name of Brown should be taken into custody "in a quiet manner." Mr. Field proposed that in the evening he should meet Brown in the street, and, pretending to be drunk, jostle up against him; on which signal, a local watchman who was in the secret had been appointed to take Field into custody, and make Brown charge him with an assault. This stratagem was carried out to the letter; Brown fell into the trap, and on being pushed against, was about to create a regular row, when the "Birmingham Charley" took Mr. Field away, and Brown followed to the lock-up house; on arriving at which Field assumed his real character, and Brown was informed he was then in custody of the Metropolitan Detective Police for sedition. Mr. Field was afterwards engaged in the celebrated Custom-house robberies of diamonds and notes, in which case the Custom-house officers were proved to be in connection with two notorious housebreakers of the names of Sullivan and Leary, who were afterwards tried and transported.

The murder of Eliza Grimwood having taken place in the L division, Mr. Field had consequently the management of this extraordinary case, the incidents of which (in connection with Mr. Field) have been so cleverly dilated upon by the inimitable pen of Mr. Charles Dickens, in his "Household Words." Mr. Field has not had much to do in foreign countries; however, whilst at Amiens Railway Station, he, being in company with Sergeant Wicker of the Detective Police, apprehended a man of the name of Wood for stealing a purse from a passenger, and on searching him found it on his person. From a life of truth and activity it is not to be supposed Mr. Field could settle down "to a cow and a cottage;" in conjunction, therefore, with a valued friend with whom Mr. Field has been associated for seventeen years, the design was conceived of establishing a PRIVATE INQUIRY OFFICE, which first saw light in September 1852. This institution is carried out with a view of "preventing and detecting crime," and has had the conduct of some of the most remarkable and extraordinary cases that have been brought to the notice of the public for a series of years; amongst which we may enumerate the Worcester forgeries, where the Rev. Edw. Nesbitt was found guilty, and transported for passing a forged bill to Mr. Hughes, a respectable solicitor and mayor of that town. The Smyth forgeries at Bristol, in which that arch impostor, Sir Richard, so ingloriously figured; the Jesuits (whose doings in this country would astonish John Bull); the incendiary fires in Hereford, London, and Kent; the laughable case of Evans and Robinson, and the still more recent one of Hawker and Teale; not omitting the capture of the Birmingham bankrupt by Mr. Simpson, Field's assistant, at the Railway Station, New York, from whom Simpson took a large amount of valuable jewellery and diamonds; and, lastly, the terrible Rugeley tragedy, in which latter affair Captain Hatton has thought it wise publicly to state, that had he, Field, communicated to him the information he had obtained, Cook's life would in all human probability have been saved. The Captain was not well informed; the truth is, the Coroner knew all about the matter, at least so Mr. Deane, the solicitor, was informed; and as to the Secretary of State, why Mr. Gover, the manager of one of the insurance companies did everything that was necessary by writing to Sir George Grey on the subject. In order to set the matter fully at rest, we are glad to subjoin Mr. Deane's letter, written to Mr. Field, which is actuated by an honourable and proper spirit:—

"Lloyd's Junction Hotel, Stafford, January, 1856.

"Mr. Field informs us that, from the information he obtained, he learned that Walter Palmer was apprenticed to Messrs. Walmesley, corn-factor, in whose service he remained for seven years. He then went into business in Staffordshire on his own account, and shortly afterwards married a lady of great respectability; after having been some time in trade, he became insolvent, and then went to the Isle of Man, taking a farm about four miles from Douglas. In consequence of his dissipated habits, his wife was compelled to leave him; she escaped from him and went back to Liverpool. Walter Palmer, on finding his wife did not return, started after her from Douglas; but he was too late, the boat had sailed. A Mr. Walkenden, not the

Mr. Walkenden who has been already examined, but a cousin, accompanied Walter Palmer to the Isle of Man, and acted as bailiff. A short time the whole of the furniture and stock-in-trade were sold. During the time Palmer was at Douglas, he had three attacks of *epileptic tremors*, and once attempted to cut his throat, in which he nearly succeeded. He was attended during these fits of insanity by Dr. Montford, of Athol Street, in the island, who sewed up the wound; he had a strait-jacket placed upon him, and was attended day and night by two men. On his return from Douglas, he went to live at the house of a Mr. Brown, who keeps a public-house in that town. Whilst stopping here he had his portrait taken; and one day, being half mad, he suddenly looked towards the picture, and, taking up a stick, thrust it through the canvass, saying, it was "an infernal deal too ugly for him."

We must now conclude, and we have no doubt our readers will think with us, that Mr. Field's life must be an endless panorama of diversity.

THE RUGELEY POISONINGS.³ COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH, JAN. 29TH.

Mr. Serjeant Wilkins said he was instructed to move their Lordships for *certiorari* to bring up the inquisition and depositions in this case with a view to move for a trial at bar, or alter the *venue* to another county than that of Stafford. He could not do better than read to their Lordships the affidavits on which he founded his motion. They were not long, but they were forcible, and it did appear to him that the justice of the case required that this motion should be acceded to by the court. The following are the affidavits:—

THE AFFIDAVIT OF WILLIAM PALMER, A PRISONER IN STAFFORD GAOL.
1. William Palmer, late of Rugeley, in the county of Stafford, but now a prisoner, confined in her Majesty's gaol at Stafford, charged upon the Coroner's inquisition with the wilful murder of the late John Parsons Cook, make oath, and say:—

1. That for ten years I have been residing at Rugeley aforesaid, occasionally practising as a surgeon.

2. The paper writing hereunto annexed, marked "A" is a copy of the warrant upon which I was arrested, and am now detained in the said gaol.

3. I am informed, and believe, that I cannot have a fair and impartial trial in the county of Stafford, or, in fact, elsewhere in the midland counties, inasmuch as the prejudice against me is so great, that I do not believe, amongst an ordinary panel of jurymen, any twelve men could be found unbiased and unprejudiced.

4. I say that, in addition to the charge of murder of the late John Parsons Cook, I am also charged on coroner's inquisitions with the murder of my late wife, Anne Palmer, and my late brother, Walter Palmer, all the said murders being alleged to have been committed by means of poison.

5. I am informed, and verily believe, that in and about the neighbourhood of Stafford (Rugeley being only nine miles distant from Stafford) I am also accused of having murdered several other persons, which rumour is generally believed to be true.

6. In each of these cases with which I am now charged, and upon which I am now in gaol, the same being charges of murder by poisoning, Alfred Swaine Taylor, of Guy's Hospital, Doctor of Medicine, is the principal witness; and in order to rebut the evidence given by him it will be necessary that I should have a sufficient number of scientific persons to give evidence upon my trial, most of whom are resident in London.

7. I say the expense of such witnesses will, as I am informed, and believe, be £1,000, or thereabouts, if I am tried at Stafford.

8. I say, of myself, that I have no funds wherewith to meet such expense, and am consequently entirely dependent on my friends and relations, and owing to my dependent position I fear I shall not be so well or properly defended, unless I can be tried where the expense of such witnesses will be much less.

9. I am informed, and truly believe, that the solicitor who is acting against me in the prosecution upon the charge of wilful murder of my said late wife, and said late brother, has admitted to my solicitor that he does not believe it will be possible for me to have an impartial trial in the county of Stafford or its neighbourhood.

10. I say that I am innocent of having committed the said alleged murders, or any or either of them.

The following is the copy of the affidavit of Mr. John Smith, sworn the 26th of January, 1856:—

I, John Smith, of Birmingham, in the county of Warwick, gentleman, attorney for Wm. Palmer, hereinafter mentioned, make oath and say:—

1. That the said Wm. Palmer is, and stands charged upon the coroner's inquisitions in the county of Staffordshire with three murders by poisoning, that is to say, with the murder of Anne Palmer, his late wife, Walter Palmer, his late brother, and one John Parsons Cook, two of such murders being alleged to have taken place at Rugeley, in the said county of Stafford, and one of them at Stafford, in the same county.

2. That I appeared to watch the proceedings taken upon the inquisitions held on the bodies of Anne Palmer, the wife of the said Wm. Palmer, and Walter Palmer, the brother of the said Wm. Palmer, for, and on behalf of, the said Wm. Palmer.

3. I say that, by reason of my having so acted, I am enabled to judge of the feeling of the inhabitants of Rugeley and the neighbourhood.

4. I say that upon the said inquisitions so held as aforesaid, there were upwards of thirty newspapers represented by various reporters.

5. That the jury empanelled upon such inquisitions appeared to me to be greatly prejudiced against the said William Palmer.

6. I say that I have been informed, and believe, that one of the jurymen who sat upon the said inquisitions assisted in getting up evidence against the said William Palmer.

7. That the evidence given upon the aforesaid inquisitions before the Coroner has all been published in the various newspapers published in Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and the neighbouring counties, and that numerous paragraphs have appeared in the newspapers unfavourable to the said William Palmer, in many instances assuming his guilt, and the effect has been, that the bulk of the inhabitants of the counties of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and other neighbouring counties, are greatly prejudiced against the said William Palmer, and eager for his conviction and punishment, and I verily believe, passing by the consideration of the question, whether he can be by evidence be proved to be guilty of the crimes with the commission of which he is charged, and I verily believe that such prejudiced feeling has been raised to such an extent as to incapacitate the persons under its influence from freely and properly doing the duty of jurors in the case in which the said William Palmer is charged as aforesaid.

8. I say that many of the paragraphs that have appeared in the said papers as aforesaid, are false, and have contained gross misrepresentations, and have, as I firmly believe, been written for the purpose of prejudging the case, and abusing the public mind.

9. I believe, amongst a very great number of persons in the county of Stafford, Warwick, and neighbouring counties, the people generally are kept in a state of excitement and prejudice against the said William Palmer by the various articles which have from time to time appeared in the newspapers.

10. I do not believe that the said William Palmer could have a fair and impartial trial at Stafford, Warwick, or in any of the midland counties, owing to the prejudice which exists as above stated.

11. I say that Mr. Deane, the solicitor for the insurance office, and who conducted the inquiry before the Coroner on behalf of the Crown, in the case of Anne Palmer and Walter Palmer, informed me that he thought there was great prejudice in the minds of the inhabitants of Stafford and surrounding counties, and he believed an impartial trial could not be had in the county of Stafford, or any surrounding county.

Upon these two affidavits he asked their Lordships, for the sake of justice, and not for the sake of the individual concerned, to grant the application. Their Lordships, after some discussion, granted a rule to show cause.

THE TRIAL OF PALMER.—At the sitting of the Court of Queen's Bench on Thursday, Mr. Edwin James offering no opposition on the part of the solicitor for the prosecution against William Palmer for the murder of his wife and brother, Lord Campbell delivered judgment in favour of a *certiorari* for removing the trial from the Assizes at Stafford.

GENERAL WILLIAMS.—A letter from Erzeroum, dated Jan. 1, states that the letters had been received from General Williams, dated Tiflis, Dec. 14. The journey from Alexandropol, he informs us, was accomplished in five days. On the second and third day the country, mountainous and grand, was well wooded and covered with vegetation; on the fourth and last they travelled over a plain, the mud extending considerably their progress. The General is enchanted with the climate of Tiflis, which he says is quite equal to that of Italy. He and his staff enjoy the most robust health, and continue to receive from the Russian authorities every mark of attention and courtesy. Orders were expected from St. Petersburg relative to their ulterior destination.

MR. STADE. Q. C. while riding through the Park on Monday morning, had a narrow escape, from his horse falling; but he escaped with a grazed forehead, a bruised thigh and shoulder, and a lacerated left hand, and appeared in the Court of Common Pleas.

Imperial Parliament.

PARLIAMENT was this day opened by her Majesty the Queen, in person. The doors of the House of Lords were thrown open to those who had the privilege of admission, shortly after twelve o'clock, and from that period, up to the entrance of her Majesty, there was one continual succession of arrivals. The greater proportion of the auditory consisted of ladies attired in the most varied and perfect toilets, while the chambers, galleries, and corridors through which her Majesty passed on her way to the throne were equally crowded with fair spectators. The bishops' benches were appropriated to the *corps diplomatique*, and wooolsacks on the floor to the judges, most of whom were in attendance. The foreign ambassadors appeared in their official uniforms, and their presence served to increase the splendour of the spectacle which the interior of the chamber presented on the arrival of her Majesty.

The Royal procession, which left Buckingham Palace shortly before two o'clock, exhibited no variation from former years. There was the usual display of footmen in state liveries, beefeaters with javelin staffs, and well-mounted dragoons, while the venerable state equipage was drawn, as of old, by eight magnificent cream-coloured horses, and preceded by several royal carriages containing the officers of the household.

Her Majesty was received at the grand entrance under the Victoria Tower by the great officers of state, and thence she was conducted to the Robing-room, where the ceremony of robing was gone through. Her Majesty then proceeded to the house, and having ascended the throne, the Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod was commanded to summon the Commons to the bar. In a few minutes afterwards, the Speaker, attended by the Serjeant-at-Arms, and a numerous cluster of Members, made his appearance, when the Lord Chancellor, kneeling, presented the Speech to her Majesty.

Her Majesty, in a firm and clear tone of voice, then read his document, which was as follows:—

HER MAJESTY'S SPEECH.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—

Since the close of the last Session of Parliament, the arms of the Allies have achieved a signal and important success. Sebastopol, the great stronghold of Russia in the Black Sea, has yielded to the persevering constancy and to the daring bravery of the Allied forces. The naval and military preparations for the ensuing year have necessarily occupied my serious attention; but determined to omit no effort which could give vigour to the operations of the war, I have deemed it my duty not to decline any overtures which might reasonably afford a prospect of a safe and honourable peace. Accordingly, when the Emperor of Austria lately offered to myself and to my august Ally the Emperor of the French, to employ his good offices with the Emperor of Russia, with a view to endeavour to bring about an amicable adjustment of the matters at issue between the contending Powers, I consented, in concert with my Allies, to accept the offer thus made, and I have the satisfaction to inform you that certain conditions have been agreed upon which I hope may prove the foundation of a General Treaty of Peace.

Negotiations for such a Treaty will shortly be opened at Paris.

In conducting these negotiations, I shall be careful not to lose sight of the objects for which the war was undertaken; and I shall deem it right in no degree to relax my naval and military preparations until a satisfactory Treaty of Peace shall have been concluded.

Although the War in which I am engaged was brought on by events in the South of Europe, my attention has not been withdrawn from the state of things in the North, and, in conjunction with the Emperor of the French, I have concluded with the King of Sweden and Norway a Treaty containing defensive engagements applicable to his dominions, and tending to the preservation of the balance of power in that part of Europe.

I have also concluded a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation with the Republic of Chili. I have given directions that these Treaties shall be laid before you.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,—

The Estimates of the ensuing year will be laid before you. You will find them framed in such a manner as to provide for the exigencies of War, if Peace should unfortunately not be concluded.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—

It is gratifying to me to observe that, notwithstanding the pressure of the War, and the burthens and sacrifices which it has unavoidably imposed upon the people, the resources of my Empire remain unimpaired. I rely with confidence on the manly spirit and enlightened patriotism of my loyal subjects, for a continuance of that support which they have so nobly afforded me, and they may be assured that I shall not call upon them for exertions beyond what may be required by a due regard for the great interests, the honour, and the dignity of the Empire.

There are many subjects connected with internal improvement which I recommend to your attentive consideration.

The difference which exists in several important particulars between the Commercial Laws of Scotland and those of the other parts of the United Kingdom, has occasioned inconvenience to a large portion of my subjects engaged in trade. Measures will be proposed to you for remedying this evil.

Measures will also be proposed to you for improving the Laws relating to Partnership by simplifying those Laws, and thus rendering more easy the employment of capital in commerce.

The system under which Merchant Shipping is liable to pay Local Dues and passing Tolls, has been the subject of much complaint. Measures will be proposed to you for affording relief in regard to those matters.

Other important measures for improving the Law in Great Britain and Ireland will be proposed to you, which will, I doubt not, receive your attentive consideration.

Upon these and all other matters upon which you may deliberate, I fervently pray that the blessing of Divine Providence may favour your Councils, and guide them to the promotion of the great object of my unvarying solicitude, the welfare and the happiness of my people.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

The House of Lords re-assembled for the adjournment at five o'clock.

The Lord CHANCELLOR having read her Majesty's Speech,

The Earl of GOSFORD moved the adoption of the Address. Adverting to the advantageous position which England had achieved through the prowess of her arms, the Noble Earl considered that the prospects were bright as regarded the future. Matters, however, had taken a new turn, and their Lordships were invited to take into account the probabilities of peace. His own opinion was, that the conditions accepted by Russia contained the basis of an honourable and lasting peace; and his earnest hope was that Ministers, taking into account the objects of the war, would succeed in bringing about such an arrangement. The Noble Earl expressed his satisfaction at the assurance which was given, that, pending the negotiations, preparations for war would not be relaxed.

The motion was seconded by the Earl of ARBUTHNOT, who recapitulated some of the encouraging incidents which had occurred during the last campaign, dwelling upon the various discomfitures sustained by Russia, and the happy combination of foreign alliances into which this country had now entered.

The EARL OF DERBY subjected the composition of the Speech to some criticism, humorously remarking that it was "redolent of water-gruel." It reminds me, he said, of nothing more than those documents which in our early school-days we were accustomed to prepare, and which went by the name of "theses,"

in the composition of which the object was to accomplish the allotted task, and fill up the six-and-thirty lines of writing, taking special care not to exceed the allotted limit, but within that limit to dilute with the largest possible amount of feeble and unmeaning language the smallest modicum of sense. It contained no information respecting the trade and finance of the country; it did not mention the Empire of India, its state and prospects; it said nothing of their colonial possessions, nothing to indicate that the people of England were not indifferent to their condition. He strongly denounced the omission of any warm or hearty acknowledgment of the courage, endurance, and services of the army, a recognition, he was sure, which would have been made had her Majesty been left to express her own sense of gratitude. He pointed out the omission of all reference to Sardinia, an ally, and Turkey, a principal, in the present war. He still more strongly denounced the silence with which the gallant defence of Kara had been passed over. But Williams, Teesdale, and their brave companions would hear in their captivity that the sympathy of the House and the country was with them. He contended that the fall of Kara must be the subject of a searching inquiry, that the blame might be fixed on whoever was responsible for it. He could not believe, without positive evidence, that the blame could be attributed to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. He hoped all the papers on the subject would be laid on the table. As to the pending negotiations for peace, he would enter into no discussion; peace and war were questions of the prerogative of the Crown, and it was not the function of Parliament to make itself the daily adviser of the Sovereign upon them. But he hoped the negotiations would not cause any indefinite suspension of hostilities by an armistice, which must in any case be more advantageous to Russia than England. He regretted that the Royal Speech made no reference to their relations with the United States, and hoped that the omission would not be considered by the Americans as a contemptuous silence. He declared he should offer no opposition to the Address, nor would he or his party throw any obstacle in the way of pursuing the negotiations for peace to a just and honourable conclusion. He concluded by alluding to the recent creation of a peerage for life in the case of Lord Wensleydale, stating that an exercise of the prerogative so unusual ought not to pass without mention on the first night of the session.

The EARL OF CLARENDON, in reply, adverted to the enlistment question, and stated that the British Minister had acted with the most scrupulous care in avoiding a violation of the neutral laws of the United States, and that, in fact, no valid cause of offence had been given. He hoped the good sense of the American people would prevent the question, which he admitted had unpleasant features, from being further agitated. With regard to the negotiations, the Noble Earl proceeded to state that they originated in Austria sending terms to St. Petersburg, as to which a categorical answer—yes or no—was demanded. The Russian Government at first made some modification in the terms, but the Austrian Government, upon receiving information of that circumstance, sent intimation to the effect that a categorical reply must be given. A reply was sent back by telegraph—a pure and simple acceptance. Doubts had been expressed as to the sincerity of Russia. It was impossible to dive into the wishes and objects of that Power; but his belief was, that the Emperor had shown great moral courage in accepting the terms of negotiation; and he hoped he would maintain the letter and spirit of the agreement. Should this be the case, there was a speedy prospect of an honourable peace being obtained; but it must be honourable to Russia also, or it would not be lasting. He had been commanded by her Majesty to conduct the negotiations at Paris on the part of this country, and he would not undertake the task for any other purpose than that of bringing them to a satisfactory conclusion.

The Address was then agreed to, and their Lordships adjourned about five minutes after 8 o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The Commons met at a quarter before four, when the newly-elected members whose names are given in another column took the oaths and their seats.

New writs were moved for Wighton, Edinburgh, Taunton, Newcastle, Rochester, Cambridge, and Midhurst, the seats for which had become vacant during the recess.

NEW MEASURES.

Mr. HAYTER read a list of measures which the Government intended to introduce forthwith; amongst others, a measure for the amendment of the Law of Partnership; for the Regulation of Joint Stock Companies; for Regulating Certain Offices in the House of Commons; amendment of the act relating to the Metropolitan Police; for the Reform of the City of London; for the Better Regulation of the Police in Counties; for the Abolition of Passing Tolls, and Better Regulation of Local Dues on Shipping, &c.

Several members then gave notice of motions.

THE ADDRESS.

Mr. BYNG moved the Address in reply to the Speech from the throne. Referring briefly to the satisfactory state of the country, and the unbroken prosperity which was enjoyed throughout every class and branch of industry, he passed on to the subject of the war, in which all other interests had been so long absorbed. Alluding to offers of peace, he expressed an assurance that, provided the details corresponded with the outlines already presented, the possibility of an honourable and permanent peace lay in immediate prospect. Meanwhile, he invoked for the Government the patience and moderation of the House and country, insisting on the importance, at the present moment, of leaving the diplomatic horizon unobscured and the verdict of the public unforeshadowed.

The Address was seconded by Mr. BAXTER, who congratulated the House on the prosperous condition of the country internally, and the improving aspect of its foreign relations. He went on to describe the several questions which would have to be determined in the approaching conferences, and showed cause for believing that Russia was honest in commencing a treaty of pacification. The negotiations, he contended, should be undertaken on the part of the Allies with the sword still in their hands; and he invited the Government to declare that, in the ensuing meeting of diplomatists, there should be no renewal of the deceptive proceedings at the Vienna Conferences, and that no relaxation should occur in preparing for another campaign.

Mr. DISRAELI was sure he was only echoing the unanimous opinion of the House when he concurred with the mover of the Address in expressing satisfaction and gratitude to her Majesty for informing them that she had acceded to overtures which afforded a prospect of a safe and honourable peace, and that "in conducting the negotiations her Majesty would not lose sight of the objects for which the war was undertaken." He hoped the House would, under these circumstances, exercise a prudent and high-spirited reserve in refraining from causing any embarrassment to her Majesty's Ministers, while, at the same time, they watched the proceedings with the utmost vigilance. It was impossible, he thought, to resist the conviction that the prospects of peace were most favourable. It was true they might end in disappointment; but, if the negotiations should fail, the country would have the satisfaction of knowing that her Majesty might appeal with confidence to Parliament to support her in the renewed struggle.

LORD PALMERSTON remarked that nothing could be more becoming than the course taken by Mr. Disraeli. Rumours had been circulated that Ministers intended to adjourn the House for a period, but no such intention ever passed through their minds. It was not, certainly, expedient to go into any details as regarded the negotiations. So soon as any steps were taken which placed the Government in a position to present arrangements actually agreed upon, it would be the duty of the Government to make them known to the House. At the present moment Ministers had nothing of that sort to communicate. He concurred in the opinion that it was not the duty of the Government to urge the country to continue a war, and submit to all the sacrifices therein involved, if the objects of the war could be obtained otherwise. No doubt the resources of the country were unimpaired. Warlike preparations were making which would place the country in a position which it had not occupied since the commencement of the war. If, therefore, another campaign be forced upon the Allies, there was reason to hope it would end in still better terms than those now proposed; but Government hoped that the terms now offered would be such as to secure the objects for which the war was commenced. He believed the country would feel that Ministers had transgressed the bounds of duty if they neglected the present opportunity, and preferred to wage another campaign in the hope of greater successes. If Ministers do not succeed in accomplishing their object, they would be able to show that the failure arose from no fault of theirs; and in this way public support would continue to be given to the carrying on of a just war till its objects were fully accomplished. Adverting to the fall of Kara, the Noble Lord remarked that greater courage, ability, and resource had never been displayed than were shown by General Williams in that memorable defence. At the proper time, he (Lord Palmerston) would be able to show that no effort of the Government had been wanting to ascertain what had led to the catastrophe. As to defeat, none had been sustained. The vanquished were the victors. The Government had taken every means to obtain the exchange of General Williams and his brave companions, and he hoped, whether hostilities were continued or not, the exchange would be made. With regard to the estimates, it was the intention of the Government to lay them on the table in the shape they had been framed, with the view of the war going on. A vote on account would be taken for a portion of the year. He trusted the House would give the weight of a unanimous vote in favour of the sentiments expressed in the Address to the Throne.

Mr. ROEBUCK said, as Lord Palmerston had not told the House what were the objects for which we engaged in the war, he would supply that omission, and would advert to the mode in which we had conducted the war. We had entered into it, he said, for the interests of humanity, to stop the dangerous aggrandisement of Russia, and to prevent her acquiring a preponderance in Europe. He strongly censured the manner in which the war had been carried on, and denied that the terms of the peace into which we were about to enter would accomplish the objects of the war. If, in another campaign, we drove Russia out of the Crimea and erected the Principalities, with Bessarabia, into a kingdom, we should obtain a better and an effectual guarantee.

Sir DE LACY EVANS insisted that we had embarked in the war, not for English objects, but for the interests of Europe and humanity.

After some brief observations from other members, the motion was agreed to, nem. con., and the House adjourned at half-past seven o'clock.



HER MAJESTY OPENING PARLIAMENT, JANUARY 31, 1856.—(DRAWN BY GUSTAV JANET.)



THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AT THE BAR OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.—(DRAWN BY JOHN GILBERT.)

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"AN OFFICER" is thanked for his sketch, which will be published in an early number.

The Correspondent who has favoured us with sketches of Sir E. Lyons' visit to Christchurch, is informed that we shall publish them next week.

ILLUSTRATED TIMES.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1866.

PARLIAMENT AND THE WAR.

THE English Parliament has not, for nearly a quarter of a century, met under circumstances of such interest as it now does. The question is not only between peace and war, but involves considerations affecting our institutions to the most remote period. War does not now mean only a series of campaigns—it means a test of the strength of monarchies and aristocracies. It means a trial whether England can, by conquest abroad, maintain at the same time her internal tranquillity. It raises all the delicate questions which belong to our form of constitution: for, when our Parliament meets, our enemies look on, in the hope that our internal dissensions may lessen our strength and impair our dignity.

As to expecting that the House of Commons would take the "Times" advice, and content itself with abnegating its functions, that would be absurd, and everybody saw the hope to be presumptuous. Never has the House of Commons been more stormy than when affairs abroad were most critical. And how can it be otherwise? You might as well expect the sea-birds to avoid the gale as essentially parliamentary natures to shun the strife, which is the inspiration of men of party.

The Speech is, in the very nature of the thing, a formal—a brief—a ceremonious production. It is as merely a symbol as the monarchy itself. When the QUEEN talks the Ministry talks; and the Ministry talks—not a human discourse, but a State paper.

The questions at stake now are, whether we are to have peace or war—and whether we are to have Lord PALMERSTON. These two are so inextricably mixed up in a Government like ours that we need not expect men to act on one apart from the other.

With regard to the first, the obstacles arising from our free constitution are—1st. The interest Lord PALMERSTON has in continuing the war which made him a Premier, and the close of which must infallibly bring the old natural powers of the governing classes to their balance; 2nd. The effect the extreme Chartists and Radicals may have by urging the war from democratic motives. These two powers are (fortunately) not in harmony. The democrats hate PALMERSTON, and mix up wild nonsense about impeaching him with their war agitation. They represent only a noisy and obscure minority, who trade on that love of excitement which war infallibly produces; and, at their recent Westminster gathering, did not produce one man of parts or position. We do not fear them. And if Lord PALMERSTON should be unreasonably belligerent, he may well fear the thoroughly pacific aspect of the French Emperor. For, no doubt, NAPOLEON feels that to continue the war would be to fight for England's, rather than France's interest. If I aid you in the Baltic, will you allow me to march to the Rhine? And what then? Who can foresee the consequences? What are the probable ulterior developments of a war so continued? We believe England hates and fears them. We are sure that, unless Russia distinctly falsifies her present statements, no large mass of the English people wishes the war continued. And we have insisted so often on the justice of the war, and on the propriety of our being ready to fight on if necessary, that we shall be excused for urging that it is absurd to presume the necessity, and to storm and rave for war, while it is by no means certain that further war will be required. Let us think less of Cronstadt, and more of the Paris negotiations. Let us do this, not in the spirit of Mr. BRIGHT, but in the spirit of common sense.

There is a certain excitement in the meeting of Parliament which induces men to talk and act with an undue degree of violence. But in England we have got familiar with this. We know that talk doesn't represent action always, we know that, where there is boundless freedom of speech, ambition, conceit, and loquacity will have their full swing. Hence what foreigners hail as evidences of dangerous mischief, we ourselves estimate at its true value. We have been so often disappointed. How great our present excitement and interest in the meeting of Parliament! Yet a few weeks will find us yawning and gaping over the long lanes of type in the daily papers, and exercising our British liberty by sneering at the tedium which that liberty bestows upon us.

Upon the whole, the tone of the Speech is moderate and pacific. Nothing is said of America—that tender matter is avoided. It is evident that the general wish to have peace, if peace can be honourably obtained, is too strong to admit of a violent Opposition activity. The Conservatives are committed to pacific views. The war Radicals are not potent. Briefly—we must all be content to wait.

RECALL OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF ENGLAND IN AMERICA.

"It is now certain," says the *New York Courier and Enquirer*, "that Mr. Buchanan has been instructed to demand the recall of Mr. Crampton, for his complicity in the enlistment of soldiers for the Crimea. The fact has the greater gravity in proceeding, as is understood, not from personal objection, but from difference in principle. Mr. Crampton acted under instructions from his own Government. Our Government maintains that that action was an infringement of international law, and also a violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of our municipal law; the English Government denies both. The correspondence, when published, will alone show the particular line of argument taken by the two Cabinets, and the precise difficulties in the way of their coming to an agreement. But though words are yet in the dark, actions, which speak louder than words, are not; and the peremptory demand for the recall of Mr. Crampton, establishes that neither party was in a very promising way towards conviction. It is this attested justification by the English Government which gives the case a new and more serious aspect. It takes away all the worth of the apologies, explanations, and regrets which it is understood were given to our Government as it interposed against the recruiting business."

SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

LORD CLARENDON will represent England at the Peace Conferences, which are fixed to take place at Paris.

SIR GEORGE GREY, according to rumour, is likely soon to resign the Home Office, in favour of the present Attorney-General, Sir Alexander Cockburn.

MR. WHITESIDE, Q.C., and SIR JAMES W. HOGG are spoken of as candidates to represent the county of Middlesex at the next election.

LORD CANNING left Suez on the 13th of January for Bombay.

THE CZAR recently said of Germany and the Western Powers, "I regard the Germans with pity, the English with hatred, and the French with admiration."

MR. BRIGHT and MR. M. GIBSON were, on Monday evening, entertained at a soiree in the Corn Exchange, Manchester, and delivered speeches in support of peace.

THE QUEEN OF SPAIN has conferred the Cross of Charles III. on Don A. de Guzman, the oldest actor in her dominions.

THE HON. W. CAMPBELL, son of the Chief Justice of England, is a candidate for the representation of Newcastle-on-Tyne.

VISCOUNT HARDINGE gave a grand dinner on Monday evening to General Della Marmora.

COVENT GARDEN THEATRE has already secured the services of Grisi and Mario for the next operatic season.

ST. DOMINGO has been invaded by the Emperor Faustin of Hayti, who crossed the frontier with three divisions of his army, but was completely routed.

THE GREAT BRITAIN, taken up by Government, is being refitted and repaired, and will sail from Liverpool on the 9th, with about 1,100 troops for Malta.

MR. MACAULAY has, this week, been on a visit to her Majesty, at Windsor.

VISCOUNT LEFFORD has been elected Temporal Peer, in the room of the late Lord de Vesci.

KING BOMBA has been getting up grand fêtes at Naples in honour of his own birthday.

THE RIGHT HON. R. A. CHRISTOPHER NISBET, M.P. for Lincolnshire, has intimated his intention of retiring from the representation immediately.

PREPARATIONS are making in all parts of Germany to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Mozart, on the 27th of June next, with great pomp.

THE CARNIVAL SEASON at Turin, Rome, Naples, and over Italy generally, has been celebrated with great brilliancy.

LORD ASHBURTON has liberally founded a lectureship, value £100 per annum, and bestowed it upon the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes.

COUNT ORLOFF and BARON BRUNOW are mentioned at Vienna as the Russian Plenipotentiaries expected to attend the approaching Conferences.

THE ENGLISH COMMISSARIAT OFFICERS, who are purchasing provisions in Spain, have received orders to suspend their operations for the present.

GENERAL MARTIMPREY, Chief of the Staff of the French army of the East, left for the Crimea immediately on the closing of the sittings of the Council of War.

AT NAPLES an attempt is being made by a Manchester manufacturer to induce that enterprising people to grow cotton.

MR. ADAM BLACK, the well-known publisher, is a candidate for the representation of Edinburgh, in the room of Mr. Macaulay.

PROFESSOR SCHNEIDWIN, of the University of Göttingen, a celebrated philologist, has lately died in Germany.

MR. BLACKETT has just retired from the representation of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Mr. George Ridley is talked of as his successor.

THE MINING ENGINEERS of the North of England propose establishing a college at Newcastle, with a capital of £30,000.

THE GREEK CHAMBERS have passed a law raising the duty on corn brought from the Danube to Greece, and re-shipped for the west, from one per cent. to five per cent.

A MEETING is to be held to-day, in Willis's Rooms, for the purpose of raising a subscription to erect a monument to the late Mr. Hume.

THE EARL OF DEREY arrived in town from Knowles, on Monday evening, to take part in the business of Parliament.

THE CEYLON RAILWAY COMPANY have issued their prospectus; the capital is one million sterling, in £20 shares, on which the deposit is to be £1 per share.

SIR MONTAGU CHOLMELEY is named as the probable successor of Mr. Christopher Nisbet, in the representation of North Lancashire.

COUNT D'AGOUTI, ex-Peer of France, and formerly Ambassador of Charles X. of Berlin, has just expired, after several attacks of paralysis, at the age of seventy.

M. DE LAMARTINE arrived in Paris on Monday last, and appears in good health and spirits.

THE QUEEN has granted a pension of £50 to Miss Thomasina Ross, known for her long connection with literature, and her translations from the French, German, and Spanish.

THE THIRD REGIMENT OF THE GERMAN LEGION arrived at Constantinople on the 12th, and on the 14th landed at Kululee; and the 2nd Regiment is daily expected in the Transit.

MR. WALPOLE has issued his farewell address to the electors of Midhurst.

THE CZAR is said to have addressed a most friendly letter to the Emperor of Austria on the existing negotiations, and expressing a decided wish for the early re-establishment of peace.

M. MAROCCHETTI, the sculptor, is at Turin at present.

MADAME GEORGE SAND is about to publish a new feuilleton, entitled "Eve and Lucipelle," in the columns of the Paris "Presse."

THE STEAMER GLASGOW, with 700 troops on board, has arrived at Marseilles from Kamiesch.

THE RUSSIAN SUBMARINE TELEGRAPH cable recently broken, will not be re-established before April next; messages for transmission to Paris and London being at present conveyed from the Crimea by steamer to Varna.

THE TURKISH PRISONERS (728 in number, including 70 officers) at Tiflis, have been invited to a banquet, prepared at his own expense, by M. Aladloff, a bourgeois of the town.

THE EARL OF CAITHNESS (formerly Lord Berridale) will, it is said, be appointed to the Lord Lieutenancy of that county, so long held by his deceased father.

PRINCE ALBERT has presented to the Oxford Free Public Library, through Alderman Sadler, a splendid copy of "The Natural History of Deeside," published by command of the Queen.

DON RINALDI, senior canon of Alba, has excommunicated a priest for having worn trousers instead of shorts and stockings to the knee, as prescribed by the Council of Trent!

THE COMTE DE CHAMBORD arrived at Modena on the 16th ult. from Parma.

THE THIRD AND FOURTH VOLUMES of the works of the Emperor Louis Napoleon have just been published.

THE NUMBER OF ATTORNEYS to be admitted during the present term is 82, of which 42 are renewals of certificates, and two are re-admissions, leaving 38 notices by articles clerks.

SIR COLIN CAMPBELL'S "Sword of Honour" fund now amounts to £280.

MADAME BILLAULT, the wife of the Minister of the Interior, died on Sunday night.

GENERALS BOSQUET, NIEL, MARTIMPREY, and other French officers, were last week decorated at the British Embassy in Paris with the order of the Bath.

THE ANNUAL BALL OF THE CLUB OF TRUE HIGHLANDERS was held on Wednesday night at the Freemasons' Tavern, and well attended by gentlemen in the garb of Old Gael, who danced to the strains of the bagpipe.

A COURT BUFFOON, one of the last of his class, died on the 3rd inst., at Constantinople, at the age of 121 years and 7 months, having been jester to four Sultans.

MR. SAMUEL MORLEY, and other members of the Administrative Reform Association held a meeting last Saturday, to discuss the fall of Kars.

CARDINAL WISEMAN has been elected a member of the Royal Society of Literature.

THE COUNTESS OF ELLESMERE'S JEWELS were lost last week from a cab, while in charge of a servant, proceeding from Bridgewater House to the railway station.

SIR DAVID BREWSTER has just awarded the prize offered by the Stereoscopic Company, 54, Cheapside, for the best essay on the Stereoscope, to Professor Lorie, of the University of St. Andrews.

THE KING OF GREECE has just decreed the establishment of libraries in all the public schools of the kingdom.

ELIZABETH GRUNDY, 14 years of age, was last week committed for trial, on a charge of wilfully and maliciously setting fire to the cotton mill of Mr. Seed, Preston.

THE DANISH DIET has adopted a bill for the repeal of the law on trading corporations, so that any person whatever, being of age, may, in the rural districts, sell, either wholesale or retail, all kinds of provisions.

MR. CARPENTER ROWE, Q.C., of the Western Circuit, has been appointed Chief-Justice of Ceylon.

THE LOUNGER AT THE CLUBS.

THERE is plenty of food for the gossips just now, in whatever way their tastes may incline. Speculations as to what will be the first measures considered by Parliament, as to what will be the result of the Peace Conferences and the Palmer trial, as to whether the sale of poisons and the ticket-of-leave question will be treated by the Legislature, &c. &c.—all these matters afford *jabulum* for the club-bore, and are discussed and commented on by Jawkins and Co. There is even a report afloat, that after the address in reply to the Queen's Speech has been carried, Parliament itself will be prorogued for a fortnight, it not being judged expedient that Ministers should be exposed to being asked certain questions the replies to which might have a baneful effect upon the pacific tendency of the Congress. This rumour must, however, be taken *cum grano*; but I believe there is little doubt that there are dissensions in the Cabinet. Several of the Ministers are said to be decidedly averse to the ratification of peace at present. A portion of the public is decidedly anxious for the continuance of the war; the example set by Westminster will, it is understood, be followed by many large constituencies, and the war party is by no means unsupported in the press. There seems to be little doubt that one more campaign would do us much good; well-informed persons speak confidently of the vastness of the naval preparations which have been made by our Government, and many have no doubt of the fall of Cronstadt and surrender of St. Petersburg in the spring. Even though we did not perform all these wonders, we might show our strength more efficiently, and regain some of that *prestige* which we undoubtedly have lost.

Three or four familiar faces will be missed on the re-assembling of Parliament—Goulburn, Macaulay, and the bearded and haggard countenance of Sibthorp. The contest for the Cambridge University seat rages high; looking at the committee list of either candidate, it is impossible not to see that Mr. Denman ranges on his side the intellect and "progressive" spirits of the age; he is very popular at Cambridge, young, and well imbued with the Liberal feeling. Mr. Walpole has the influence of the old Tory dons and heads of houses, and, it is said, confidently expects to be elected. The seat for Midhurst, which he would vacate, were his hopes fulfilled, is aspired to by one of his own school, Ten-Thousand-a-Year Warren, backed by the Conservative and *Blackwood* interest, and hitherto unopposed. It seems tolerably certain that Macaulay will be succeeded in the representation of Edinburgh by Mr. Adam Black, the well-known bookseller, who in various municipal situations which he has held has shown himself thoroughly identified with the place and its inhabitants, and who appears to be a general favourite.

Should two or three reports which I have heard prove true, Ministers in both Houses have stormy days in store for them. It is said that Lord Grey will take the earliest opportunity of making a furious attack upon them on the American question—a subject of which the Government is said to fight very shy, as veracious replies to many questions might involve a statement expressive of their real feelings towards and opinions of the American Congress, which, by the way, are said to be anything but flattering. In the House of Commons, the question of the fall of Kars, and the conduct of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe will be one of the first mooted, the conduct of the case being left, it is said, to Mr. Roebuck. This gentleman has also undertaken to what old John Willet called, "tackle" the Government upon the better appropriation of the superannuation contribution levied on their *employés*, on which matter it is supposed the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be compelled to yield. The Attorney and Solicitor General will have enough to do; moreover, as the laws relative to the management of railways, relative to insurance companies, and ticket-of-leave convicts are all to be altered. There is a rumour afloat to the effect that Sir George Grey is about to retire from the Secretaryship of State for the Home Department, in which he is to be succeeded by Sir Alexander Cockburn, the present Attorney-General; that Sir Richard Bethell is to be Attorney-General, and Mr. Collier, Q.C., Solicitor-General; that Lord Chief Justice Jervis is to be raised to the Peerage, and that Thesiger is to take his place; but none of these changes however are, I hear, settled on, though there is some foundation for the report.

Two recent articles in "Household Words" have created a sensation; the one being Mr. Dickens' reply to Miss Martineau's pamphlet, attacking him for his exposure of the danger which factory operatives are exposed to from machinery which is not "fenced;" the other a wonderful photograph of wretchedness, called "A Nightly Scene in London," and descriptive of a group of homeless and starving women found by Mr. Dickens, and "A friend well known to the public" (Mr. Albert Smith) huddled round the door of Whitechapel workhouse.

I very much regret to have to chronicle the death, by his own hand, of Mr. J. W. Glasse, an artist whose name was beginning to be well known, and whose picture, "A Border Spear," was one of the gems of the last Exhibition at the British Institution.

Your Irish readers will be glad to hear that her Majesty has been pleased to grant to Mr. Samuel Lover, the well-known author and song writer (composer of "Rory O'More," "The Angel's Whisper," "The Land of the West," "The Low-Backed Car," &c. &c.), a pension of £100 a year.

THE THEATRICAL LOUNGER.

I announced last week that the production of the squib, "Twenty Minutes with an Impudent Puppy," long promised at Covent Garden, was postponed *sine die*, and at the time I wrote I believe the information was correct. On Monday evening, however, a modified edition of the farce was played, under the title of "What Does He Want?" The house was crammed; all the professional critics were present, as were many actors and persons taking an interest in dramatic affairs. The entertainment commenced with Mr. Anderson's usual display of tricks, &c., which lasted an hour and a half, and exasperated the newspaper-men, who, having seen it all *ad nauseam*, and being there on business, were anxious to witness the novelty and get back to their offices. At length, in the midst of one of the "Professor's" speeches, he was interrupted by a shout of "Stop a minute!" and Mr. Leigh Murray ran upon the stage, excellently made up in wig, dress, and countenance after Mr. Charles Mathews, whose voice and gesture he imitated admirably. Telling the Wizard that he intended to take his place, and perform his tricks, the *pseudo* Mathews commenced a variety of burlesque sleight-of-hand performances, *à la* Anderson, every one of which, although glaring failures, he declares perfection. When asked what further he can do, he imitates Charles Kean in the Corsican Brothers, and Anderson himself in Rob Roy; and conducts himself in so obtrusive a manner that he is finally "extinguished" after the Houdin manner by the Professor, reappearing, however, in the pit, and embracing his rival with great *bonhomie* at the fall of the curtain. It will be seen that the construction of the piece is slight in the extreme, while it seemed to me as though that favourite implement of the penny-a-liner, the "pruning-knife," had been injudiciously applied to the dialogue, which was nearly pointless. Mr. Leigh Murray's imitation of Mr. Mathews was capital; the flourish of the handkerchief, the drawing off the gloves, the run, the swagger, the short metallic laugh, were all rendered to a nicety. Equally good and more ludicrous was his mimicry of Mr. Anderson, though I doubt if the "Professor" took the joke as readily as the audience. Mr. Murray was, I understand, suffering from severe bronchitis, which compelled him to omit several songs; and Mr. Anderson was labouring under a loss of memory, which caused him to omit all the author's words. These mishaps will probably be rectified after a few nights. There was a good deal of hissing during the piece; why, I could not understand, as there is not one offensive or unkind allusion in it.

HENRY MAYHEW'S NEW WEEKLY PERIODICAL
ON LONDON AND LONDONERS.

BUST OF JAMES MONTGOMERY.

At the last annual meeting of the Sheffield General Infirmary, a Marble Bust of James Montgomery, the Christian poet, was presented to the Institution by William Overend, Esq., Deputy Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire, acting on behalf of the subscribers, who have thus placed a very suitable memorial of their revered townsman in the board-room of the Hospital, where, for many years, he had discharged the duties of Chairman of the Governors with perfect satisfaction to all concerned.

Mr. William Ellis was entrusted with the execution of the bust, and has been successful in giving a faithful representation of the poet as he appeared a short time before his death. We understand Mr. Ellis was originally a pupil in the Government School of Design at Sheffield, and the best represented in our engraving does him great credit, in being both a good likeness and a highly-finished work of art.

HUNTING SKETCHES.—NO. II.

TRAVELLING the other day down the North Western line, I found I had for companions in the carriage a tall gentlemanly-looking man, of about thirty years of age, and an elderly, sharp-faced man in spectacles, who was apparently journeying in search of information, for, like Mr. Pickwick with the cabman, he asked an infinite number of questions, and made perpetual notes of all that was told him. At every station we stopped, he asked the guard its name, and would have pursued his inquiries had not the impatient official closed the conversation by a shout of "all right," and a motion of his hand to the engine-driver. Every farmhouse, wood, and piece of water that we passed offered a theme for his remarks; and so persevering was he, that at length my other companion appeared slightly annoyed, and on being asked for the hundredth time the name of an old manor-house, lying a few fields off on our right, answered abruptly, "That, sir, is Sir Writton Badminton's, as fine a gentleman, and as good a sportsman, as any in the county; and to prevent your asking us any more questions for the next quarter of an hour, or rather to prevent the chances of your getting an answer to them, I'll tell you an anecdote about him. I knew him well, in days of old, when he lived in first-rate style in that old place, and often stopped down there during the hunting season; he's away now, living chiefly at a German watering-place, and some infernal vulgar cotton-growing fellow has rented the house. At the time I mention, Sir Writton's affairs were desperately involved, and all his friends knew it; but he did not seem an atom changed, and never alluded to the subject. It was just after Christmas, and the house was full; there were some fellows in the grounds there, two or three Guardsmen, and Bob Spottles the comic writer, and no end of a good set; there were some glorious girls, too; and we had charades, and private theatricals, and dancing till all hours in the morning. But there was one man whom we could none of us make out—a short, fat, elderly man, who did not pronounce his h's, and put his knife in his mouth, and called everybody

Sir and 'Ma'am,' and was as thorough a specimen of vulgarity as you can imagine. Sir Writton was wonderfully polite and jolly to him, and paid him every attention. He was called Mr. Simmonds, and had a servant with him, a remarkably sealy-looking person, like a bailiff run to seed. He was a convivial old party, old Simmonds, and acted in the theatricals, and sung a comic song, in a red wig, which we got from Nathan's for him—a most extraordinary song, with a chorus half-an-hour long. But the most peculiar thing about him was that he never let Sir Writton out

of his sight, and when he was called away the man-servant took his place. We found out at last that he held poor Writton's acceptances to a heavy amount, and that, upon the strength of this, he had insisted upon being asked down to the hall. Well, after we'd been there some days, the frost all broke up, and as the North Warwickshire met in the neighbourhood, we anticipated fine fun with Master Reynard. Tuesdays and Fridays were the days of the week, and on the first of them, to our astonishment, as we were all standing in the hall waiting for

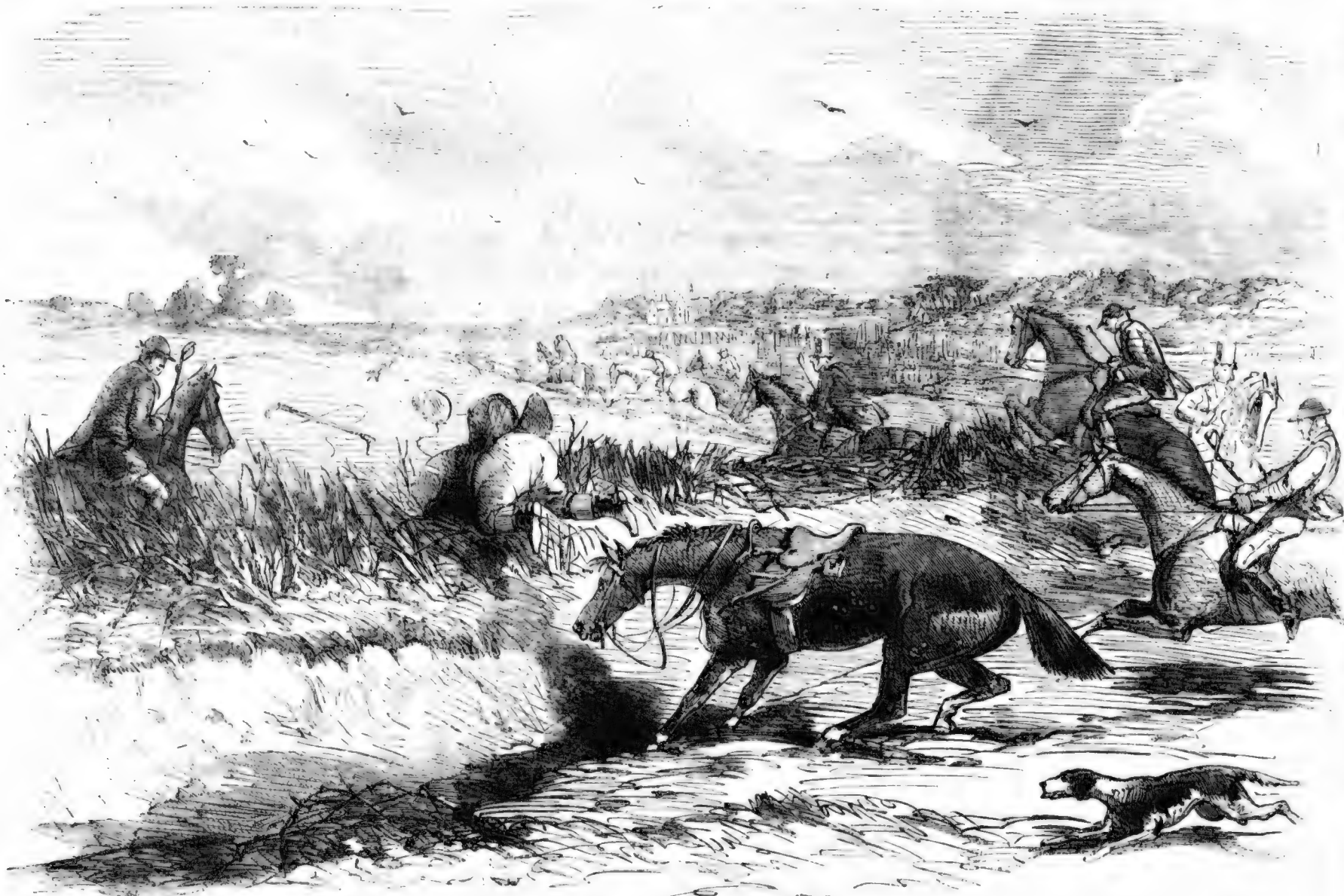


BUST OF JAMES MONTGOMERY, THE POET.

the nags to be brought round, down came old Simmonds in scarlet, coris, and tops. 'Hollo, Sir Writton, says Sir Writton, 'you're not going, are you?' 'No, right, Bart,' says Simmonds, 'I'm not going to lose a of the fun. I'm agoing with 'em, I am; blessed if I am, and I'll show you what a man who saw three runs with Epping hunt can do.' 'Bravo, old wig and whiskers, sings out De Boots of the Coldstreams, 'you're a p— 'un, and no mistake!' So off we set! Old Simmonds was mounted on Rattler, an old horse thought equal to his weight, and warranted to carry him steadily. A cuppie was first tried, but without success, and at last pushed into Hother Wood, where a brace of foxes were soon on foot. The pack were at once clapped on to the right line, and now commenced in earnest the business of the day. Jack Oldcastle, Lord Runnymede's nephew, down at the bottom of the cover, yells out, 'Gone away and away they go, through Bromsgrove Lichy, over the meadows to Oldborow Wood—here the field settled into their places—across the large enclosure, up Skinner's Hill, and then over a long piece of grass, terminated at the end by a bit of a brook, disguised by a hedge in front. Here was the first glimpse I caught of Old Simmonds, and my attention was attracted to him by a shout from Oldcastle and De Boots. Looking round, I saw Rattler, with head and tail up, ready to jump a town, the old boy grasping the pommel of the saddle with both hands, and lamentable expression in his face. On he came, but just as he reached the hedge, Rattler dropped his tail, baulked, and away went old Sim, like a rocket, pitching head first among the thorns. 'All the rest was leather'—his breeches and boots were all that was to be seen of him. They pulled him out, and set him on the nag again, and led him home; but Sir Writton had got the office. Old Simmonds never left his bed for three days. By the end of the second, the Baronet was in Belgium, and from that distance made a better bargain with the old boy. 'It's a providential interference,' said the Baronet; 'when a man goes out hunting, he should think of what he leaves at home—accepted bills.'"

REWARD OF ARCTIC DISCOVERY.—The "Gazette" of last week refers to the proclamation of the Lords of the Admiralty of the 17th of March, 1850, offering rewards of £20,000 to any parties discovering and effectually relieving the crews of the *Erebus* and *Terror*, and £10,000 to any parties relieving said crews or conveying intelligence whereby relief could be sent, and £10,000 to such parties as should first succeed in ascertaining their fate. The "Gazette" then gives notice:—"That Dr. Rae having claimed to be entitled to the reward of the £10,000, under the terms of the third paragraph of such proclamation, they will proceed within three months from the date hereof, to adjudicate on such claim, and that all persons who, by virtue of such proclamation, deem themselves entitled to the whole or any part of the reward in question, must prefer their claims within such time, after which no claim will be entertained."

AN IMPROVED MORTAR.—Mr. Thomas Dunn, a stationer at Glasgow, has perfected a mode of making mortars of malleable iron in one mass, so as to prevent the internal flaws which result from the usual way of forging these instruments of offence. The peculiarity of the invention consists in the material employed, which is principally charcoal iron wire rolled flat, and coiled with perfect closeness and mathematical exactness round an inner case gun, which can be made of either cast or other metal.



HUNTING SKETCHES, NO. II.—(BY PHIZ.)

"WH! AH! OH! TRUE! YES! PRACTISING FOR CLOWN IN PANTOMIME!"

THE POISONING OF SIR THOMAS OVERBURY.

One of the earliest authenticated poisonings cases that disgraced the annals of this country, is that of which Sir Thomas Overbury was the victim while a prisoner in the Tower, during the reign of James the First. The King, it is well known, displayed a dubious partiality towards a man named Richard Carr, the handsome page of one of his Scottish courtiers. The consequence was, that Carr was perfectly overwhelmed with marks of his Sovereign's favour. He was knighted, then created a viscount, and finally an earl. Not empty honours, however, were conferred upon him. He was enriched by lands granted to the Crown, and by presents from those who sought, through influence, some marks of the King's favour.

Among the many who found themselves attracted to the rising star of Carr, was the young and beautiful Countess of Essex, who suffered to be taken with the charms of the young Scot, and entirely gave herself over to this new passion, without daring, however, for a time, to admit to the person that caused it. He, however, was not long in ascertaining the preference she appeared to show for him, and the result was an adulterous intrigue, which was carried on with the assistance of Carr's friend and chief adviser, Sir Thomas Overbury. The Countess soon attained a powerful influence over Carr, and persuaded him to interest himself with the King to bring about their marriage. As Carr's husband, however, was living, it was necessary to procure a divorce, ere a union could legally take place. Carr made Overbury a confidant in the matter, and he, for some reasons of his own, was strongly opposed to the contemplated union. He objected to the "baseness of the woman," and the safety of such a marriage as she and Carr contemplated, declaring that both could and would throw an insuperable obstacle in the way of it. Carr communicated Overbury's objections to the Countess, who, though she felt herself driven to an extremity, was yet resolved that no power on earth should interfere with the gratification of her most anxious wishes; and she laid her plans accordingly.

Overbury she determined to get rid of; and she was not long in planning the way in which this was to be accomplished, and in prevailing upon Carr to assist in removing this obstacle to their union. The scheme of Carr with Overbury was this:—

Carr proceeded to extol to the King, who at this period appears to have been almost entirely under the control of his favourite, the abilities of Overbury, intimating, at the same time, that he took too much upon him, and was grown intolerably insolent, and therefore that he should be very glad to have him removed, by some honourable employment, praying his Majesty to send him ambassador to Russia. The King, liking the proposal, made the appointment immediately. Carr acquainted Overbury with the King's intention, and pretending that he could not live without him, entreated him to refuse the appointment, promising to procure him a better at court, adding that it would not be in his power to hinder the King from being angry at first, but he did not question his being able to appease him in a few days. Overbury fell into the snare; and when James sent for him to acquaint him with the appointment, he humbly besought his Majesty to make choice of some other person. As soon as he had retired, Carr aggravated to the King his pride and insolence, in daring thus to refuse his Majesty's gracious offer, adding it was requisite to chastise him. The result was, that the King commanded Overbury to be sent to the Tower; and some few days previously, caused a creature of his



THE EARL AND COUNTESS OF SOMERSET.

he believed to be poisoned, and which he was enjoined not to taste. It also came out that he had received a sum of money from this lady, through her agent Mrs. Turner, as a reward on the death of their victim. Another part of the wretch's statement, corroborated by a different witness, was, that Somerset sent a letter to Overbury, in the same enclosing a white powder, which he requested him to take, and not to fear, though it made him sick, for out of that circumstance he would draw an argument for his liberation.

Several other accomplices were traced out and strictly examined; after which the King, partly through fear of infamy, and partly through a sense of justice, despatched an order to the Chief Justice, to make out a warrant for the apprehension of Somerset. Yet still James kept him in ignorance of his approaching fate. Coke was very active in the affair; he and his brother commissioners took three hundred examinations, and then reported to the King that Frances Howard had employed sorcery to incapacitate her lawful husband, Essex, and to win the affection of Carr; that to remove Overbury, the great bar to the adulterous marriage of the lovers, a plan was concerted between them and the Countess's uncle, the late Earl of Northampton, to have the victim committed to the Tower; and that, in short, she and her second husband were the instigators of all the horrible and murderous cruelties that were perpetrated for the destruction of the unfortunate gentleman.

Weston, the warder, who had continuously administered the poison to Overbury, was first arraigned, and, on being found guilty, underwent the extreme sentence of the law at Tyburn.

Sir Thomas Monson, chief falconer, was next arraigned, and Simon Mason, the servant of Monson, who had been employed to carry a poisoned tart to the ill-fated knight, was likewise brought before the court. "Simon," said the Chief Justice, "thou hadst also a hand in this poisoning business." "I had but one finger in it," cried he, "which cost me both skin and nail." He had, it seems, out of liquorishness, as he was carrying the tart, tasted with his finger a little of the syrup. His ingenious answer caused him to be acquitted, as it was thought he would not have tasted the syrup, had he known it to be poisoned.

With regard to Monson, Coke exhorted him to confess his share in the murder and throw himself on the mercy of the court. But he rejected the advice indignantly; for he was aware that the King feared he would "play an unwelcome card on his trial," if he so willed. To this performance, however, he was not driven, for almost immediately after being placed at the bar, some yeomen of the guard, acting under James's private

orders, to the astonishment and indignation of the public, carried him off to the Tower, from which he was in a short time liberated.

The trial of the infamous Mrs. Turner, one of the most beautiful women of the age,—the person who introduced yellow starched ruffs—was calculated to awaken a more thrilling interest than any of the other accessory criminals. She had in her youth been a dependent in the family of the Earl of Suffolk, and a companion to his beautiful daughter, Frances Howard. When they renewed their intimacy in London, the young lady was the unwilling wife of Essex. Her trial disclosed a hideous medley of profligacy and superstition; and what was hardly less monstrous, is the fact that Coke, the other judges, Bacon, and the spectators, believing in witchcraft, considered her trafficking with love potions, and so forth, as the most damnable of her crimes. Many of the fair sex, and of the aristocracy, went in coaches to Tyburn to see Mrs. Turner die. She came to the scaffold roused and dressed as if for a ball, with a ruff, stiffened with yellow starch, round her neck, but otherwise professed great penitence. The fashion of yellow starch was not merely introduced by this woman, but it went out with her at Tyburn. Elways, the lieutenant of the Tower, made a strong denial of his guilt at his trial, but confessed all on the scaffold.

The Earl and Countess of Somerset were confined in separate apartments in the Tower, during the interval between their incarceration and their trials, and were constantly beset by ingenious and importunate messengers from court, who never failed to assure them that if they would only confess, all would go well with them. At length the Countess was brought to confess her guilt; but Somerset held out stoutly, indignantly declaring that "Life and fortune are not worth accepting when honour is gone."

It was on May 24th that the Countess was arraigned before her peers. She trembled excessively while the clerk read the indictment, and spoke with a voice scarcely audible, when she pleaded guilty. Sentence of death was now pronounced against her, when she, "in a most humble, yet not base manner, besought the Lord High Steward, to whom she first directed her speech, and then likewise to the rest of the Lords, that they would be pleased to mediate his Majesty on her behalf for his gracious favour and mercy, which they promised to do; and then, expressed her inward sorrow by the many tears she shed, departed." Within a few days she received a pardon.

On the day of the arraignment of the Countess, Somerset, who ought to have been tried along with her, received a warning from Sir George More, Lieutenant of the Tower, that his trial was appointed for the following day. But the Earl declared that he would not go unless carried in his bed, adding that the King had assured him he should never be brought to the bar, nay, that James dared not to bring him to trial. This language made the Lieutenant quiver and shake; so that away goes he "to Greenwich, late as it was, being twelve at night, and bounces up stairs as if mad." The King, who was in bed, on hearing what the Lieutenant had to communicate, fell into a passion of tears, crying, "On my soul, More, I wot not what to do! Thou art a wise man; help me in this great strait, and thou shalt find thou dost it for a thankful master."

"I have been with the King," said More, the instant he returned to

SIR THOMAS OVERBURY.
(FROM A RARE PRINT BY ELSTRAKKE.)

own, Sir Jervis Elwes, to be made Lieutenant of the fortress. Overbury was at once put into close confinement in a room, and not suffered to keep one of his servants, or to receive the visit of a single relative or friend—a rigour not used even towards the greatest offenders.

Overbury who was still languishing in the Tower, had been extremely sick with the poison that was continually in small doses given him, without knowing the cause of his illness. In this lamentable state, he wrote to the favourite, entreating him to use his influence with the King. Carr answered that he had not yet been able to speak in his behalf, but hoped to do it in a few days. Meanwhile, he sent a certain powder in his letter as a sure remedy to cure his distemper. But Overbury had the good sense not to take it. To hasten the catastrophe, Mrs. Turner was required by the Countess to make use of the black art. But sorcery failed to hurry the victim quickly enough to his grave. It was therefore resolved to trust to poison as a more certain means of compassing his death.

It was early in September, 1613, that this dreadful determination was taken; and two days afterwards an agonising death, occasioned by the administration of corrosive sublimate, ended Overbury's earthly miseries; one Franklin, an apothecary's apprentice, having assisted Weston in forcing the murderous element upon the prisoner. The report gained ground that these two miscreants, seeing the extraordinary effects of this poison, and fearing, if they suffered it to operate any longer, it would leave marks on the body, and rise up in judgment against them, smothered him with the bed-clothes. When he was dead, he was on the very same day hurried to the grave, without waiting the inspection, or even the arrival of any friend or kinsman, and without the holding of a coroner's inquest.

The suspicion that Overbury had been carried off by means of poison, was long kept half alive by successive rumours; it was also whispered very generally that the murder might be traced, were an eager and searching inquiry instituted, through inferior agents, to Somerset and his Countess. These things reached the ear of James, who sent for Sir Gervase Elways, lieutenant of the Tower, questioning him so ably and clearly—for the prisoner prided himself with some reason on his skill on such occasions—that the terrified man was brought to a confession of such particulars as left but little doubt of the guilt of Lady Somerset and also of his favourite.

Weston was next examined by the Chief Justice Coke, and was with some difficulty brought to confirm the whole story of the Lieutenant. He added carrying to Overbury tarts and jellies sent by the Countess, which



THE DUCHESS DE BOUILLON.

Somerset; "I find him a most affectionate master unto you, and full of grace in his intentions; but he prays that to satisfy the clamour for justice that you appear at Westminster, although you shall return instantly, without any further proceeding; only you shall know your enemies and their malice, though they shall have no power over you."

With this trick of wit, says a memoir-writer of the period, Somerset's fury was allayed, so that he was got quietly, about eight in the morning, to Westminster Hall. Yet, it being feared that his former bold courage might revert again, and that he might fly out into some strange discovery, two servants were placed on each side of him, with a cloak on their arms, who were ordered, if the prisoner did in any way assail the King, to hood-wink him, and carry him instantly from the box.

The prisoner was after all quite composed when he was arraigned, the Attorney-General taking good care not to ruffle him in any way, and avoiding such invectives as were usually employed against prisoners. He abstained from such disturbance by the King's orders, as he admitted, declaring also that he was not disposed to blazon the Earl's name in blood. Accordingly he handled the case most tenderly, never urging the guilt of the prisoner without bringing forward the assurance of the royal mercy. All along, however, Somerset maintained his innocence, displaying far more ability during the trial than the world had given him credit for, and defending himself so ably and pertinaciously that the trial lasted eleven hours. Still, he never mentioned the King, and rejected every exhortation to confess. The peers at last found him guilty, and sentence of death was pronounced, whereupon he implored the intercession of the Lord High Steward, and the rest of the peers, to his Majesty for mercy. In like manner, as the Countess had been, he was ere long offered a pardon, which, however, he refused, declaring that he was an innocent man, and that he would accept nothing less than a reversal of the judgment. After a few years' imprisonment he sought that which he had before rejected, and with his lady he retired into the country, there to reproach and to hate each other. The King would not permit the Earl's arms to be reversed and kicked out of the chapel of Windsor, and upon his account it was ordered "that felony should not be reckoned amongst the disgraces of those who were to be excluded from the Order of St. George." Further, to keep the discarded favourite and depository of royal secrets from desperation, he was allowed for life £4,000 annually—a splendid income in those days

THE MARCHIONESS DE BRINVILLIERS.
(FROM A SKETCH BY LE BRUN.)

THE CRIMES OF THE MARCHIONESS BRINVILLIERS.

(Abridged from "Remarkable Trials.")

UPON a fine morning in autumn, towards the end of the year 1665, a number of people had collected upon the Port Neuf, Paris. Immediately their attention was directed to a close carriage, the door of which an officer of police endeavoured to open; while his assistants stopped the horses and seized the coachman. The carriage door having been forcibly opened, a young officer in a cavalry uniform jumped out, closing the door quickly after him, though not so speedily as to prevent the bystanders from observing a female upon the back seat, who appeared, by the care with which she strove to conceal her features, to be anxious to avoid observation. The cavalry officer at once demanded upon what authority the carriage had been so violently and rudely arrested? and had in return the question put to him, "Are you the Chevalier Gaudin de Sainte-Croix?" Having acknowledged that he was, a *lettre de cachet* was shown him, whereupon he submitted to the authority, and was conducted to a cell in the Bastille, where a feeble light sometimes penetrated, but fresh air never.

The Chevalier was, according to some, the natural child of a French noble. He was a captain in the regiment of Tracy, and was about thirty years of age. He was handsome in person, and had an intellectual countenance; a boon companion and a gallant officer; was very susceptible of the tender passion; and prodigal as a prince, yet without an income. Towards the year 1660, he had formed an acquaintance with the Marquis de Brinvilliers, then a colonel in the regiment of Normandy, and upon the return of the Marquis to Paris, he presented the Chevalier to his young wife. The Marchioness was at the period in all the splendour of her beauty. Her figure was small, but exquisitely modelled. Her features were charmingly delicate and most regular; and what was very remarkable, she had such a command over the expressions of her countenance, that she could render them proof against manifesting any internal emotion. Sainte-Croix and thus lady became, from the first, mutually attached. As for the Marquis, he either did not see the truth or did not care for the fact; for he betrayed no jealousy, but pursued a course of most reckless extravagance which at length involved him in such embarrassments, that his young wife, who no longer loved him, but had abandoned herself to the Chevalier, demanded and obtained a separation.

Having quitted her husband's house, the Marchioness lived openly in the society of Sainte-Croix, a system of conduct which in no degree appeared to affect the Marquis, who continued his ruinous career without evincing the slightest concern relative to his wife's proceedings. But it was otherwise with her father, who felt shocked at her conduct, affecting as it did his reputation. He therefore obtained the *lettre de cachet*, authorising the arrest of Sainte-Croix, wherever he might be found. Accordingly he was sent to the Bastille in the manner already mentioned.

A dramatic scene occurred in the cell in which the Chevalier was confined, after the bolts that were to bar him from liberty had harshly grated upon his ears. By means of the faint rays of light that reached the gloomy abode, his eye alighted upon a ghastly form in the same apartment, which was that of another prisoner, who, on hearing the curses which Sainte-Croix bestowed upon those who had torn him from his pleasures, presented himself, and proffered his best services to the maddened captain. On Sainte-Croix demanding who and what he was that so promptly volunteered his help, the answer he received was to the effect, that his fellow-prisoner was no other than the Italian Exili, a man not only fearfully celebrated throughout France, but also Italy, on account of the numerous murders, by means of poison, which he was believed to have perpetrated, but of which it had been found impossible to procure sufficient proof to convict him. Exili had come from Rome to Paris, where he soon attracted the notice of the police; and although the legal evidence was defective, yet that of a moral nature was held to be sufficient to authorise his imprisonment for a time in the Bastille. At first the Chevalier shuddered on coming into contact with the notorious Italian, but repugnance soon passed away, when listening to this man, who was one of the most skilful masters for making scholars of willing pupils; in fact, Exili was no common practitioner—he was an adept in poisoning. To him murder had become an science; he had reduced it to fixed principles, and such was the eminence in its exercise that he had attained, that he seemed to pursue it less from interest than a love of experiment and excitement.

It is probable enough that Sainte-Croix was at first appalled by the representations of the Italian, although he could not but be anxious to obtain the means of terrible revenge which the revelations and the co-operation of such an adherent promised. This, however, appears to be certain: when, after about a year's association as prisoners, first one and then the other of the pair were liberated, the Chevalier had so profited by the teachings of Exili, that he thought himself to be almost as thoroughly initiated in the science of murder as was his tutor. He was acquainted now with powders and liquids, of some of which it is the property to consume by slow degrees, and of others to be so rapid in their effects that they strike down like the lightning, without time for the victims to lend utterance to their agony.

Soon after the release of the teacher and the taught, apartments were hired for Exili, for the Italian was to pass as the dependent of the other. Whether the Marchioness of Brinvilliers had visited her paramour during his imprisonment or not, is unknown; but it is certain, that after his liberation they were more intimate, if possible, than before, although past experience had taught them the necessity of more caution. Meanwhile, it was resolved between them to make an early trial of the science acquired by the Chevalier; and M. D'Aubray, the father of the Marchioness, was selected by the guilty lovers as the first victim. Were he dead, the daughter would be freed from a rigid censor and the opponent of her infamous passion; while her losses, through the extravagance of her husband, would be repaired in consequence of the inheritance of a portion of her father's property.

The period for experiment arrived. M. D'Aubray was to pass the vacation at his villa of Offemont, his daughter offering to accompany him, which circumstance helped to strengthen his belief that she had broken off all connection with Sainte-Croix. Offemont was a place well adapted for the perpetration of the crime. Situated in the forest of Aigne, about four leagues from Compiègne, poison might do its work before succour could be obtained. M. D'Aubray set out with his daughter and a single servant. Never had the Marchioness before bestowed such sedulous attention upon her parent as now. Now, too, she availed herself of her extraordinary power over her emotions. Ever by her father's side, sleeping in the room adjoining, taking all her meals with him, incessant in the most delicate attentions and the kindest offices, allowing none to wait upon him but herself, yet amid all these tender assiduities, with her dreadful project ever in her thoughts, how is it possible to figure to one's self a more deceptive fiend, a more amiable demon? It was while manifesting this outward affection and gentleness, yet cherishing an infernal design, that she one day presented to her parent a poisoned soup. She then retired to an adjoining chamber, listening and awaiting the result. The effect was speedy; she heard the cries and groans of her father, and hastened to him.

The emotions of the Marchioness betrayed the deepest anxiety, which her father, amid his cruel sufferings, endeavoured to alleviate, by assuring her it was merely a sudden and transitory illness, for which he was averse to call in medical skill. At length, however, the symptoms growing more alarmingly violent, he yielded to his daughter's entreaties, and gave orders to send for a physician. He came at eight the following morning; but, being only enabled to judge of the indisposition from the account given by M. D'Aubray and his daughter, he pronounced it to be a fit of indigestion, prescribed accordingly, and returned to Compiègne. When the physician called in the morning he found M. D'Aubray worse; for though the vomitings had ceased, the internal pain was more excruciating than before,—a strange heat seemed to consume his bowels. To remove to Paris was now proposed, in order to obtain the best advice and assistance; but the patient had become so weak that it was doubtful whether he would be able to bear the fatigues of the journey. The Marchioness, however, was most earnest for the removal, and her father acceded to the proposal, reclining in the carriage with his head resting upon her bosom during the journey. Everything had proceeded to her wish. The scene was changed; the physician who had seen the earlier symptoms would not witness the final struggles or the agonies of death; and in tracing the progress of the illness, no

one would be present to speak. Thus the thread of inquiry had been broken, and its shreds were now too far apart to be reunited. M. D'Aubray continued to grow worse and worse, but reached Paris alive, where he expired after an agony of four days, in the arms of the weeping murderers, upon whom with his last breath he bestowed blessings and heaped thanks for her unexampled tenderness to him during his last illness.

The objects which had begun to be contemplated by the Marchioness and her paramour were not yet fully attained. She had got rid of a rigid censor and a vigilant eye; and Sainte-Croix had got his revenge in some measure slaked. But M. D'Aubray's will did not realise all the expectations of the guilty lovers; the greater part of his property descended to his two sons; and hence the daughter's fortune was but slightly increased. Meanwhile, the Chevalier still pursued his extravagant course of life, and needed money.

After the lapse of the usual period of mourning, the Marchioness and Sainte-Croix openly resumed their intercourse. Her brothers remonstrated through the medium of the younger sister, then in a Carmelite convent. Her first crime she found to be almost fruitless. She had hoped to free herself from the remonstrances of her parent, and to share his fortune; yet her inheritance barely sufficed to pay her debts, while the father's censures were continued by her brothers, the elder of whom was president of the civil tribunal, and could separate her again from her lover: the younger was a Parliamentary counsellor, whose influence was not slight, and might be used to curb her in if she proved obstinate. Now these inconveniences were to be remedied according to the tactics which the guilty lovers had fixed upon. One of Sainte-Croix's footmen, named Lachaussee, quitted his service, and, through the influence of the Marchioness, the man was taken into the employ of her brothers. But this time, the better to avoid suspicion, it was determined to make use of a poison less rapid in its action than that which had destroyed the father. They recommenced their operations. The Marchioness was regarded as a charitable lady, ever ready to relieve the distressed, and to share with the Sisters of Mercy the attendance upon the sick, to whom she sent wine and medicine at the hospitals. Hence it caused no surprise to see her at the Hotel Dieu, distributing biscuits and preserved fruits to the convalescent. One month after this, she revisited the hospital, to inquire after some patients in whose welfare she was much interested. She was informed they had suffered a relapse, these fresh symptoms had presented themselves, that a deadly languor overcame them, beneath which they gradually wasted away. Of its cause, the doctor at the institution could tell her nothing; they said the disease was unknown. Again, at the expiration of a fortnight, she made further inquiry. Some of the patients were dead; others still lingered in hopeless agony, mere animated skeletons, whose only signs of life were the voice, sight, and breath. Within two months, all were dead to whom she had administered biscuits, dried fruits, &c., medical skill having been equally foiled upon their examination after death, as it had been in their treatment while living. Such success was most encouraging to the Marchioness and her paramour; and Lachaussee, who was still in the service of the brothers of the murderers, received a command to fulfil his mission.

It was about this time, namely, the beginning of April, 1670, that the brothers of the Marchioness went to spend the Easter holidays in the country, Lachaussee accompanying them. The day after their arrival a pigeon pie was placed on the table at dinner; seven who partook of it were soon taken ill; three who had not were unaffected. Singular enough, those on whom the poison took the strongest effect were the two brothers. As before, all medical aid proved powerless. They returned to Paris, both so changed that they seemed to have been the victims of a protracted and most painful illness.

The Marchioness was at this time residing in the country, where she remained during the illness of her brothers. At the very first consultation, all hope of saving the life of the President was relinquished by the physicians. He died on the 17th of June, 1670. Suspicions were excited, and a post-mortem examination took place, but the doctors would not affirm the death to have occurred from other than natural causes. At the end of the next three months the other brother died, many of his symptoms having been similar to those of the predeceased, though the destruction had made slower progress. So far was suspicion from alighting upon Lachaussee, that the Counsellor left him a sum of 100 crowns, in consideration of his attentions.

Events of such a strange nature, so frequent and fatal in one family, could not entirely escape suspicion. True, no conjectures hitherto were levelled towards the Marchioness or her lover, the former going into mourning, and the other pursuing his course of extravagance as before. In society he had made acquaintance with many of the nobility, and formed friendships with men of fortune, amongst the latter of whom was Reich de Penautier, a millionaire, the receiver-general of the clergy, and treasurer of the estates of Languedoc—one of those people with whom all things succeed; and who seem by the power of money to give laws to creation. Penautier was connected in business with his head-clerk, who died suddenly of apoplexy, an event which was known to him before the man's family were made acquainted with it; all papers relative to their partnership disappearing, so that the widow and her children were left wholly destitute. The clerk's brother-in-law commenced an inquiry upon some vague rumours as to the cause of the man's death, but the relative who so unseasonably stepped forward also died suddenly. Penautier, the friend of Sainte-Croix, rich as he was, and at the head of lucrative offices, still longed for further appointments, one of these having been held by a personage of the name of Saint Laurent, with whom Sainte-Croix had also not only formed an intimacy, but to whom he had recommended a servant named George. The Chevalier's old servant was not long in the employ of Saint Laurent, before the latter was taken ill; the symptoms in every respect resembling those of M. de Aubray and his sons, but terminating much more rapidly in death. Penautier now stepped into the vacant office, no doubt handsomely rewarding Sainte-Croix. But as suspicion was entertained by the new-made widow of foul play having been used for the removal of her husband, the body was ordered to be opened. Upon learning what steps were to be taken, George, Sainte-Croix's old servant, disappeared without requiring his wages; this greatly strengthened the suspicions which were entertained by the widow.

At the instance of Madame de Saint Laurent, active search was made for George, but the fellow escaped. Meanwhile rumours of so many strange and unexplained deaths were widely circulated in Paris; in the gay saloons of which, their frequent discussion gave Sainte-Croix no small degree of inquietude. Still he pursued his chemical experiments in an obscure part of the city, away from his proper place of residence. Although his manipulations in regard to the preparations of subtle poisons were conducted with all possible secrecy, a just retribution was, however, at no great distance. Already, he was so ill, although ignorant of the cause, that unable at length to quit his dwelling-house, he had got a furnace brought to him, that he might still continue his experiments. He was at this time engaged in researches into the nature of a poison so subtle, that its mere emanation was fatal. It was amid these fearful occupations, at the moment when bending over the furnace, watching, no doubt, the deadly operation approach its greatest intensity, that the glass mask worn by him as a protection against its fumes, went to pieces, and the agent or accomplice of so many murders, by means of his fell knowledge and preparations, was struck down as by a thunderbolt. His wife—for the villain was a married man—surprised that he remained an unusually long time in his laboratory, repaired thither, and found him lying extended and quite lifeless, near to the furnace, the fragments of the glass mask round him. It was impossible for her to conceal the circumstances of his death; the servants had seen the body and could reveal the facts. The proper functionary was, therefore, required to put everything under seal; thus insuring a proper scrutiny into the affairs and conduct of the deceased.

The tidings of the Chevalier's death flew rapidly abroad. Lachaussee was amongst the first to hear of it; and this fellow knowing that the rooms of his former master were in possession of the authorities, displayed great anxiety to obtain some money and papers, which he declared to belong to him, but received for answer that he must wait the removal of the seals. Nor was Lachaussee the only one who became seriously alarmed by the death of Sainte-Croix; for the Marchioness of Brinvilliers, to whom the secrets of the fatal cabinets now sealed were familiar, no sooner heard of the sudden death of her paramour, than she hastened to the

functionary who had set his seal on the effects of the deceased, although it was late at night, requested an immediate interview, desiring that a particular casket should be given up to her. He was unavailing, although she offered fifty louis for the article, which she now to be lost; she set out immediately for her country, thence proceeded to Liège, where she took refuge in a convent.

At length the necessary functionary and his orders passed over the property and articles which had been under the authority of the deceased. One of the first objects which arrested their attention was the very casket which the Marchioness had been so eager to get into her hands; it was about a foot square. Upon opening it, a *laissez-passer* of paper was entitled "My Will," wherein the most positive injunctions were given that the casket with its contents should be conveyed to the Marchioness at her death; but that if her decease should precede his own, the whole should be burnt, "inasmuch as whatever it contains belongs alone, and that there is nothing in it of any use to another." There also bore an order and injunction in the following words: "The packet, directed to M. Penautier, which should be delivered up, should on opening increase the interest of the scene, and the inventory was proceeded with in silence.

A number of most carefully sealed up packets were met with, some containing strange chemical mixtures, others poisons; others also found containing remarkable liquids. There was a small box in which was a kind of stone, designated "the infernal stone." Besides these extraordinary objects and descriptions, two bonds were found, one from the Marchioness, the other from Penautier; the former corresponding in date with the death of M. D'Aubray the father, the latter with that of Saint Laurent, the difference of money amount showing that, according to the tariff of Sainte-Croix, parricide was more expensive than a mere common assassination.

The first care of the officers, after having made these strange discoveries, was to analyse the contents of the packets, and to test them upon various animals. These results, whilst proving the extent of Sainte-Croix's chemical knowledge, excited the suspicion that he had not gratuitously played his art. And now the late deaths, so sudden and remarkable, occurred to all. The bonds of the Marchioness of Brinvilliers and Penautier proved the existence of covenants of blood; but as one was absent, and the other too rich and powerful to be arrested without strong proof of guilt, Lachaussee was brought before the proper tribunal, when, as he firmly denied the charges preferred against him, his guilty knowledge relative to his late master's proceedings, he was, according to the barbarous law of the period, put to the torture.

The man underwent the terrible punishment of the *hoof*, which consisted in placing each limb of the prisoner between two wooden boards, and then compressing them together by a ring of iron, after which wedges were driven down the wooden frames. The ordinary torture was four, the extraordinary eight wedges. At the third wedge, Lachaussee declared he was ready to confess. The torture was thereupon remitted. He was placed upon a mattress, and being unable to speak, half-an-hour was allowed him to regain sufficient strength to do so.

Upon his recovery, the wretch admitted his guilt, at the same time declaring that Sainte-Croix and the Marchioness had employed him to poison her brothers; adding that the Chevalier had intended to poison the sister-in-law of the Marchioness, the wife of one of her brothers, viz., the President of the Civil Court. Lachaussee was condemned to be broken alive on the wheel, and there to expire. By the same decree the Marchioness was condemned to have her head cut off.

Although the Marchioness was in a convent at Liège, it appears that she had by no means renounced certain earthly indulgences. She became reconciled to the death of Sainte-Croix, and bestowed her favour upon a person named Theria, of whom, however, beyond his name, no information remains. Meanwhile, as every new discovery made relating to her intimacy with the deceased Chevalier the more deeply implicated her, it was resolved to pursue her even into the retreat where she conceived herself in safety. Yet this was an undertaking of great difficulty, and required the utmost address. Desgrais, one of the most active of officers, offered to take the conduct of the commission. He was a handsome man of about thirty-six or thirty-eight years of age, whose appearance in no way betrayed his employment; he assumed all characters with equal ease, associating with every grade of society, under his disguise, from the most miserable beggar to the greatest lord. His offer was accepted. Accordingly he departed for Liège, escorted by a body of archers, and furnished with a letter from the King, addressed to the Municipal Council of Sixty, by which Louis XIV. reclaimed the Marchioness. The Council ordered her to be delivered up to Desgrais; he dared not, however, arrest the Marchioness in the convent, for two reasons—first, because, if made acquainted with his intentions, she might find concealment in some of the cloistered retreats known only to the superiors of the establishment; and secondly, because an attempt of this kind in so religious a city as Liège, might lead to some popular excitement, by means of which she might be enabled to escape with triumph.

Desgrais, considering that the disguise of an abbé the least likely to excite suspicion, presented himself at the gates of the convent as a compatriot returning from Rome, who was unwilling to pass through Liège without paying his respects to a lady so distinguished by her accomplishments and misfortunes as the Marchioness. Desgrais put on all the manners of one of patrician family; and, flattering as a courtier, adventurous as a hero, charming alike by his vivacity and his self-reliance, this visit failed not to secure for him the invitation to pay another. He returned early next day, and was even more cordially received than before. The charming abbé affected to be obliged to quit Liège immediately; he was consequently the more urgent for another interview; and this was arranged for the next day, with all the usual forms of a rendezvous. By a conjunction of circumstances, which had doubtless been created by the expert police officer himself, their agreeable conference was continually interrupted, and this, too, precisely at the moment when witnesses were most inconvenient. Desgrais professed to feel exceedingly hurt at the occurrence of these ill-timed interruptions, and spoke of the danger of both of them being compromised thereby. All this he followed up by beseeching the Marchioness to grant him a meeting beyond the city, at a place where they should neither be recognised nor followed. The Marchioness met Desgrais at the appointed spot, when, on taking her by the hand, he made a signal—the archers advanced—t a lover removed his mask—and the wretched lady was made a prisoner. The officer upon this returned immediately to the convent, produced his order from the Council of Sixty, by which he got access to the room of the Marchioness, where, beneath her bed he found a casket, which he immediately sealed up and brought away. When she beheld this in his hands, the sight appeared wholly to overwhelm her; but, recovering herself, she claimed from him a paper which it contained, entitled her *Confession*. The request was, of course, refused; and as he turned to give orders to set forward directly for Paris, she endeavoured to choke herself by swallowing a pin, but was prevented. At the place where they halted in the evening for supper, the knives, forks, and everything with which self-destruction could be attempted, were removed. Whereupon the Marchioness bit a piece from the glass out of which she was drinking, but was prevented from swallowing it as before. She then said to Barbier, one of those who guarded her, that if he would save her she would amply reward him, proposing for that purpose the assassination of Desgrais. This, however, the man declined, but offered to serve her in any other way in his power. Thereupon, she asked for pen, ink, and paper, and wrote the following:—

"My dear Theria,—I am in the custody of Desgrais, who is forcibly carrying me from Liège to Paris. Come and release me."

Barbier took the writing, and promised to deliver it as addressed, but instead of doing as he said, it was placed in the hands of Desgrais. Next day she sent another, acquainting her paramour, that as the escort consisted of only eight persons, four or five determined men might readily defeat them, and that she reckoned upon his making the attempt. At last, anxious from not receiving any answer, nor observing any indication of an endeavour to fulfil her requests, she despatched a third, in which she besought Theria, if he were not able to attack the escort and free her, at least to slay two of the four horses which belonged to it, and to put by the confusion this would cause, to gain possession of the casket and

as without this she was inevitably lost. At Roeroy, the escort of the Counsellor Palluau, whom the Parliament had empowered to take the prisoner on her way, and to submit her to an unexpected examination, so that, being thus taken by surprise, she should not have had time to prepare. Desgrais made him acquainted with every previous fact, and also placed in his hands the basket which had of such extreme solicitude to the Marchioness. Palluau, and, amongst others, the paper entitled "My Confession," which furnished a strange proof of the necessity which constrained the guilty, even in the most enormous cases of crime, to confide in the preservation of such a record as she had drawn out, to be a monstrous infatuation. The account was comprised in seven parts, and commenced thus:—"I confess myself to God, and to you, my friends, being a complete narrative of her crimes. In one of the articles she confessed to have been an incendiary; in another to have committed her unchaste life at seven years of age; in another, to have poisoned her father; in others, to have poisoned her brothers, to have attempted to poison her sister, and to have indulged in strange and debaucheries, which she recited; the world, ancient and modern, does not seem to offer anything more disgustingly flagitious or more heinous than did this woman.

Not only in the preliminary examination by Palluau, on the way to Roeroy, but after her arrival there, when before the judges that sat upon the bench, the Marchioness confined herself to a complete system of forgetfulness, or of flat denial in her answers. She maintained, with the utmost respect towards the court, the proudest contempt towards the witnesses testified against her. The evidence, however, was overwhelming, and her defence was committed to M. Nivel, one of the most celebrated advocates of France. One female witness, for example, testified, that the Marchioness, when rather animated after a party, said to her, "See! this is the way to avenge yourself of your enemies, and, small as this box is, it is full of inheritances." Even before the close of the trial, it was manifest to all that an awful sentence of condemnation would be pronounced against the wretched sinner, a conclusion at which she herself could not fail to arrive when, on the 10th of July, 1676, she beheld M. Pirot, doctor of the Sorbonne, for her cell in the Conciergerie, which he did at the request of the President of the court before which she was arraigned. The doctor from time to time prayed with her, and found her well disposed to listen to his pious exhortations; indeed, so far as outward appearances went, she was thoroughly penitent.

The Marchioness of Brinvilliers, according to the doctor's opinion and estimate of her, was a woman naturally brave, and endowed originally with a meek and virtuous imagination, yet seemingly indifferent to the impressions it received; her mind was active and acute: her notions clear and decisive, which she expressed with precision and brevity; she was ready with expedients in cases of difficulty, and at once resolving upon the course to be pursued; yet, withal, trifling and inconstant, impatient of repetition, which induced the doctor not unfrequently to change the subject of discourse, or reinforce it in a more varied form. She spoke well, without study and without affectation; always self-possessed, and never misled into inconsiderate expressions. It would have been possible, either by her conversation or bearing, to have imagined her so fearfully criminal as confession proved her to be. She was of a slight figure; her hair was of chestnut colour, and very thick; the head well formed; her eyes blue, of a mild expression, and very beautiful; her nose extremely fair; and the expression of her countenance by no means disagreeable, although not collectively alluring. Her age was 46, but she looked much older. Her face generally wore a placid and amiable expression; yet, at intervals, when sorrowful or excited, the emotion was testified by a look in some degree fearful; and her scorn or anger were marked by a sort of painful convulsiveness.

While the doctor was engaged with her in religious converse, an officer arrived to read the sentence of the court, and to conduct her to the torture chamber, where she was to undergo the question, or examination. This was to be of both kinds, in order to obtain the names of all her accomplices; she was then to make a public avowal of, and demand pardon for, her crimes before the principal entrance of Notre Dame; to which she should be taken in a common cart, barefooted, with a rope round her neck, and holding a lighted torch, of about two pounds' weight; thence she was to be conducted to the Place de Grève, where she was to be beheaded, her body burnt, and her ashes scattered to the winds.

Having been conducted to the torture chamber, and given over to the executioner, whom she recognised at once by the rope in his hands, she regarded him coldly from head to foot, but without uttering a word. Even the terrible apparatus which was before her she surveyed with firmness; but on perceiving three buckets of water, she turned to one of the officers, not wishing to speak to the executioner, and said, "It is to drown me, doubtless, that so much water has been brought here; for surely, considering my size, you have not the purpose to make me swallow it." The executioner, without a word, took off her veil, and successively all her clothes, then placed her against the wall, and made her sit on the wooden frame of the ordinary torture, which was about two feet high. To the questions as to her accomplices, she replied denying that she had any; and she affirmed that she knew neither in what the poisons consisted, nor their antidotes; adding, "If you will not believe my word, my body is in your power; you can torture that."

Upon this, a sign was made by an officer to the executioner, who proceeded to fasten the feet of the Marchioness to two rings placed before her; then turning her body backwards, he fixed her hands to two rings in the wall, distant about three feet from each other. The head and feet were at the same height, whilst the body, supported by a trestle, formed a half curve, as if resting upon a wheel. Still further to stretch the limbs, the executioner gave the rack two turns, which brought the feet, before this distant about a foot from the rings, six inches nearer.

Upon the trestle, and during the racking, the horribly-treated creature several times cried, "Oh, my God! they kill me, and yet I have spoken truth." Water was given, in the manner constituting the extraordinary torture. Under such abominable treatment, she soon became much convulsed, but said only, "You may kill me." Meanwhile, the rack had been increased, till the ligatures at the wrists and feet were so stretched, that the flesh was cut and the blood flowed copiously.

After a lapse of some two or three hours, everything was put in readiness for the procession that was first to conduct the Marchioness, clad in the shift of criminals, to Notre Dame, to make her public avowal, and thence to the scaffold. Before she was placed in the cart, about 50 spectators were admitted to see her, certain noble ladies being of the number, which caused her to exclaim to the good priest, as she held up her manacled hands, "Oh, sir! does not this appear a strange and barbarous curiosity?" Some time after, when writhing under the indignities of popular curiosity which beset her, her visage became convulsed, her brows sternly knit, her eyes seemed to emit fire, her mouth was distorted, and for an instant the demon appeared in every feature.

It was during this paroxysm, which lasted for a quarter of an hour, that the celebrated painter, Lebrun, who was close by, became so impressed by the effect, that the following night, unable to sleep, and having its reflection continually presented to his mind, made the beautiful sketch now in the Louvre, and near this another sketch of a tiger, to show that the principal traits were the same, and bore a strong resemblance to each other.

Having carried the lighted torch to Notre Dame, and having read her public confession of poisoning her father and brothers, and of attempting similarly the life of her sister, the procession moved towards the Place de Grève. On arriving there, the executioner proceeded to lift the Marchioness from the cart, when she immediately ascended the ladder. On the scaffold she was made to kneel before a bar of wood, which divided it; the priest knelt by her side, so as to be enabled to address her to the last. The executioner now cut off the hair which hung around her neck. He next removed the top part of her dress, bound a handkerchief over her eyes, and desired her to hold her head erect, which she did, apparently intent only on the exhortation of the doctor, repeating at intervals the prayers he recited, when they bore immediate reference to her salvation. The executioner had meanwhile

drawn from beneath the folds of his mantle a long sabre; and as, after pronouncing absolution, the priest saw he was not yet ready, he said a form of prayer, which the Marchioness repeated slowly after him.

The words were hardly uttered, when the priest heard a dull heavy blow, like the sound given by a cleaver, when dividing flesh upon a block, and immediately the voice ceased. The head rolled on the scaffold, whilst the body fell forwards, supported by the rail, and so remained to the gaze of the populace. The executioner then, taking under one arm the body, and with the other hand picking up the head, threw them both immediately upon the wood pile behind the scaffold, to which his assistant immediately set fire.

"On the morrow," says Madame de Sevigné, "the bones of the Marchioness were sought for, as the people believed she was a saint."

By the execution of this French Medea, the practice of poisoning was not suppressed; many persons died from time to time under very suspicious circumstances; and the archbishop was informed, from different parishes, that this crime was still confessed, and that traces of it were remarked both in high and in low families. For watching, searching after, and punishing poisoners, a particular court, called the *Chambre de poison* or *Chambre Ardente*, was at length established in 1679. This court, besides other persons, detected two women, named La Vigoreux and La Voisin, who carried on a great traffic in poisons. The latter was a midwife. Both of them pretended to foretell future events, to call up ghosts, and to teach the art of finding hidden treasures, and of recovering lost or stolen goods. They also distributed philtres, and sold secret poison to such persons as they knew they could depend upon, and who wished to employ them either to get rid of bad husbands, or recover lost lovers. Female curiosity induced several ladies of the first rank, and even some belonging to the court, to visit these women, particularly La Voisin; and who, without thinking of poison, only wished to know how soon a husband, a lover, the King or his mistress, would die. In the possession of La Voisin was found a list of all those who had become dupes to her imposture. They were arrested and carried before the above-mentioned court, which, without following the usual course of justice, detected secret crimes by means of spies, instituted private trials, and began to imitate the proceedings of the Holy Inquisition. In this list were found the distinguished names of the Countess de Soissons, her sister the Duchess de Bouillon, and Marshal de Luxembourg. The first fled to Flanders, to avoid the severity and disgrace of imprisonment; the second saved herself by the help of her friends; and the last, after he had been some months in the Bastille, and had undergone a strict examination, by which he almost lost his reputation, was set at liberty as innocent. Thus did the cruel Louvois, the War Minister, and the Marchioness de Montespan, ruin those who opposed their measures. La Vigoreux and La Voisin were burnt alive, on the 22nd of February, 1680, after their hands had been bored through with a red-hot iron, and cut off. Several persons of ordinary rank were punished by the common hangman; those of higher rank, after they had been declared by this tribunal not guilty, were set at liberty; and in 1680 an end was put to the *Chambre Ardente*, which in reality was a political inquisition.

THE WAINWRIGHT POISONING CASE.

(Extracted from Francis's "History of Life Assurance").

IN 1830, two ladies, both young and both attractive, were in the habit of visiting various offices, with proposals to insure the life of the younger and unmarried one. The visits of these persons became at last a somewhat pleasing feature in the monotony of business, and were often made a topic of conversation. No sooner was a policy effected with one company than a visit was paid to another, with the same purpose. From the Hope to the Provident, from the Alliance to the Pelican, and from the Eagle to the Imperial, did these strange visitors pass almost daily. Surprise was naturally excited at two of the gentler sex appearing so often alone in places of business resort, and it was a nine days' wonder.

Behind the curtain, and rarely appearing as an actor, was one who, to the literary reader versed in the periodical productions of thirty years ago, will be familiar under the name of Janus Weathercock; while to the student of our criminal annals, a name will be recalled which is only to be remembered as an omen of evil. The former will be reminded of the "London Magazine," when Elia and Barry Cornwall were conspicuous in its pages, and where Hazlitt, with Allan Cunningham, added to its attractions. But with these names it will recall to them also the face and form of one with the craft and beauty of the serpent; of one too who, if he broke not into "the bloody house of life," has been singularly wronged. The writings of this man in the above periodical were very characteristic of his nature; and under the nom de guerre of Janus Weathercock, Thomas Griffith Wainwright wrote with a fluent pleasant egotistical coxcomby, which was then new to English literature, a series of papers on art and artists. An *habitué* of the opera and a fastidious critic of the *bellet*, a mover among the most fashionable crowds, into which he could make his way, a lounge in the parks and the foremost among the visitors at our pictorial exhibitions, the fine person and superfine manners of Wainwright were ever prominent. The articles which he penned for the "London," were lovingly illustrative of self and its enjoyments. He adorned his writings with descriptions of his appearance, and—an artist of no mean ability himself—sketched boldly and graphically "drawings of female beauty, in which the voluptuous trembled on the borders of the indecent;" and while he idolised his own, he depreciated the productions of others. This self-styled fashionist appears to have created a sensation in the circle where he adventured. His good-natured, though "pretensions" manner; his handsome, though sinister countenance; even his braided surtout, his gay attire, and semi-military aspect, made him a favourite. "Kind, light-hearted Janus Weathercock," wrote Charles Lamb. No one knew anything of his previous life. He was said to have been in the army—it was whispered that he had spent more than one fortune; and an air of mystery, which he well knew how to assume, magnified him into a hero. About 1825, he ceased to contribute to the Magazine; and from this period, the man whose writings were replete with an intense luxurious enjoyment—whose organisation was so exquisite, that his love of the beautiful became a passion, and whose mind was a significant union of the ideal with the voluptuous—was dogged in his footsteps by death. It was death to stand in his path—it was death to be his friend—it was death to occupy the very house with him. Well might his associates join in that portion of our litany which prays to be delivered "from battle, from murder, and from sudden death," for sudden death was ever by his side.

In 1829, Wainwright went with his wife to visit his uncle, by whose bounty he had been educated, and from whom he had expectancies. His uncle died after a brief illness, and Wainwright inherited his property. Nor was he long in expending it. A further supply was needed; and Helen Frances Phoebe Abercrombie, with her sister Madeline, step-sisters to his wife, came to reside with Wainwright; it being soon after this that those extraordinary visits were made at the various life offices, to which allusion has been made.

On the 28th of March, 1830, Mrs. Wainwright, with her step-sister, made their first appearance at an insurance office, the Palladium; and by the 20th of April a policy was opened on the life of Helen Frances Phoebe Abercrombie, a "buxom, handsome girl of one-and-twenty," for £3,000, for three years only. About the same time a further premium was paid for an insurance with another office, also for £3,000, but for only two years. The Provident, the Pelican, the Hope, the Imperial, were soon similarly favoured; and in six months from granting the first policy, £12,000 more had been insured on the life of the same person, and still for only two years. But £18,000 was not enough for "kind light-hearted Janus Weathercock;" £22,000 more was proposed to the Eagle, £5,000 to the Globe, and £5,000 to the Alliance; all of whom, however, had learned wisdom. At the Globe Miss Abercrombie professed scarcely to know why she insured; telling a palpable and foolish falsehood, by saying that she had applied to no other office. At the Alliance, the secretary took her to a private room, asking such pertinent and close questions, that she grew irritated, and said she supposed her health, and not her reasons for insuring, was most important. Mr. Hamilton then gave her the outline of a case in which a young lady had met with a violent death for the sake of

the insurance money. "There is no one," she said in reply, "likely to murder me for the sake of my money." No more insurances, however, being accepted, the visits which had so often relieved the tedium of official routine ceased to be paid. These applications being unsuccessful, there remained £18,000 dependent on the life of Helen Abercrombie.

In the meantime Wainwright's affairs waxed desperate, and the man grew familiar with crime. Some stock had been vested in the names of trustees in the books of the Bank of England, the interest only of which was receivable by himself and his wife; and determined to possess part of the principal, he imitated the names of the trustees to a power of attorney. This was too successful not to be improved on, and five successive similar deeds, forged by Wainwright, proved his utter disregard to moral restraint. But this money was soon spent, till everything which he possessed, to the very furniture of his house, became pledged; and he took furnished apartments in Conduit Street for himself, his wife, and his sisters-in-law. Immediately after this, Miss Abercrombie, on pretence or plea that she was going abroad, made her will in favour of her sister Madeline, appointing Wainwright sole executor, by which, in the event of her death, he would have the entire control of all she might leave.

She then procured a form of assignment from the Palladium, and made over the policy in that office to her brother-in-law. Whether she really meant to travel or not is uncertain; it is possible, however, that this might have been part of the plan, and that Wainwright hoped, with forged papers and documents, to prove her demise while she was still living, for it is difficult to comprehend why she should have voluntarily stated she was going abroad, unless she really meant to do so. In this there is a gleam of light on Wainwright's character, who, when he first insured the life of Miss Abercrombie, might have meant to treat the offices with a "fraudulent," and not a positive death. Whatever her role in this tragic drama, however, it was soon played. On the night which followed the assignment of her policy, she went with her brother and sister-in-law to the theatre. The evening proved wet; but they walked home together, and partook of lobsters or oysters and porter for supper. That night she was taken ill. In a day or two Dr. Locock attended her. He attributed the indisposition to a mere stomach derangement, and gave some simple remedies, no serious apprehension being entertained by him.

On the 14th of December, she had completed her will, and assigned her property. On the 21st she died. On that day she had partaken of a powder, which Dr. Locock did not remember prescribing; and when Mr. and Mrs. Wainwright—who had left her with the intention of taking a long walk—returned, they found that she was dead. The body was examined; but there was no reason to attribute the death to any other cause than pressure on the brain, which obviously produced it.

Mr. Wainwright was now in a position to demand £18,000 from the various offices, but the claim was resisted; and being called on to prove an insurable interest, he left England. In 1835, he commenced an action against the Imperial. The reason for resisting payment was the alleged ground of deception; but the counsel went further; and so fearful were the allegations on which he rested his defence, that the jury were almost petrified, and the judge shrunk aghast from the implicated crime. The former separated unable to agree; while the latter said, a criminal and not a civil court should have been the theatre of such a charge. In the following December, the company gained a verdict; and as the forgery on the Bank of England had been discovered, Wainwright, afraid of apprehension, remained in France. Here his adventures are unknown. At Boulogne, he lived with an English officer; and while he resided there, his host's life was insured by him in the Pelican for £5,000. One premium only was paid, the officer dying in a few months after the insurance was effected. Wainwright then left Boulogne, passed through France under a feigned name, was apprehended by the French Police; and that fearful poison known as strychnine being found in his possession, he was confined at Paris for six months.

After his release he ventured to London, intending to remain only forty-eight hours. In an hotel near Covent Garden he drew down the blind and fancied himself safe. But for one fatal moment he forgot his habitual craft. A noise in the streets startled him; incautiously he went to the window and drew back the blind. At the very moment "a person passing by" caught a glimpse of his countenance, and exclaimed, "That's Wainwright, the Bank forger." Immediate information was given to Forrester; he was soon apprehended, and his position became fearful enough.

The difficulty which then arose was, whether the insurance offices should prosecute him for attempted fraud, whether the yet more terrible charge in connection with Helen Abercrombie should be opened, or whether advantage should be taken of his forgery on the Bank, to procure his expatriation for life. A consultation was held by those interested, the Home Secretary was apprised of the question, the opinions of the law officers of the crown were taken, and the result was that, under the circumstances, it would be advisable to try him for the forgery only. This plan was carried out, the capital punishment was foregone, and when found guilty he was condemned to transportation for life.

His vanity never forsook him. Even in Newgate he maintained his exquisite assumption, triumphing over his companions by virtue of his crime. "They think I am here for £10,000, and they respect me," he wrote to one of his friends, who would not desert him. He pointed the attention of another to the fact, that while the remaining convicts were compelled to sweep the yard, he was exempted from the degrading task. Even here his superfine dandyism stuck to him. Drawing down his dirty wristbands with an ineffable air of coxcomby, he exclaimed, "They are convicts like me, but no one dare offer me the broom."

But bad as this might be for such a man, he brought yet harsher treatment on his head. As, previously to Helen Abercrombie's death, she had made her will in favour of her sister, the claim of the latter was placed before the various offices in which the life had been insured. While this was pending, Wainwright, thinking that if he could save the directors from paying such large sums, they would gratefully interfere for the alleviation of his misery, wrote a letter giving them certain information, coupled with a request or condition that they should procure a mitigation of punishment. What this revelation was may be judged from the united facts, that it saved the offices from paying the policies, and that when they communicated it to the Secretary of State, an order was immediately sent to place him in irons, and to forward him instantly to the convict ship. If his position were bad before, it was worse now; and he whose luxury a rose leaf would have ruffled, and whose nerves were so delicately attuned that a harsh note would jar them, must have been fearfully situated. He had played his last card, and he had lost. When he wrote from Newgate he had claimed for himself "a soul whose nutriment was love, and its offspring art, music, divine song, and still holier philosophy." In the convict ship he shrunk from the companionship of the men with whom he was associated, and his pride revolted from being placed in irons without distinction like them. "They think me a desperado! Me! the companion of poets, philosophers, artists, and musicians, a desperado! You will smile at this—no, I think you will feel for the man, educated and reared as a gentleman, now the mate of vulgar ruffians and country bumpkins."

It is evident there was no change in him. He was just as much a selfish, coxcombical charlatan as when, fifteen years before, he wrote in one of his art-papers of "exchanging our smart, tight-waisted, stiff-collared coat for an easy chintz gown with pink ribbons;" when he touched so lightly but luxuriantly on "our muse or maid-servant, a good-natured Venetian-shaped girl;" and of "our complacent consideration of our rather elegant figure, as seen in a large glass placed opposite our chimney mirror." Others might be ashamed of self-idolatry; he gloried in it. Such was his description of himself; and who that has read it will ever forget that other description of him as exemplified by Gabriel Varney? "Pale, abject, cowering, all the bravery rent from his garb, all the gay insolence vanished from his brow, can that hollow-eyed, haggard wretch, be the same man whose senses opened on every joy, whose nerves mocked at every peril?"

The career of Wainwright is instructive. From the time that he quitted the simple rule of right, he wandered over the world under influences too fearful to detail, and he died in a hospital at Sydney under circumstances too painful to be recapitulated.

THE BELANY POISONING CASE.

MAXWELL tells us, in his amusing volume of "Border Tales and Legends," that some ten years ago, on entering the little fishing town of North Sunderland, he was somewhat surprised to observe a new house in ruins, and that he learned, on inquiry, it had been the residence of "the notorious Belany." The name of this individual is now well nigh forgotten; let us briefly recall the very remarkable circumstances which dragged it from the obscurity for which nature had intended its owner.

About the year 1840 there was residing in North Sunderland, a widow lady named Skelly, who was possessed of copyhold property, and had a leasehold interest in some mines and lime-works, as well as a daughter beautiful, accomplished, and fascinating. At that time there came across the Border a man named J. C. Belany, who commenced practising as a surgeon, though without a diploma, and made an attempt to revive a taste for the ancient and noble sport of "falconry," without any success. He was generally considered harmless enough, though with the too common trick of shooting with a long bow; and those who knew him best could only describe him as being too great a fool to deserve a worse character.

Belany, however, in an unlucky hour for her became enamoured of Miss Skelly; and his addresses having been received with favour, and approved of by her mother, they were married in February, 1843. Belany then gave up such practice as he had, went to live with his mother-in-law, and occupied himself with the management of the mines and lime-works. Six months after this arrangement, Mrs. Skelly went the way of all flesh. Belany explained that her death had been "caused by a bilious fever;" and, in October, 1843, Mrs. Belany having attended the Court of the Lord of the Manor, at Bamburgh, and been admitted in the Roll as devisee-in-fee, under her father's will, immediately surrendered to her husband and herself as tenants-in-fee.

Matters having been thus settled, Belany, who was then thirty, and his spouse, who was twenty-two, continued to reside in North Sunderland till May, 1844. At that time Belany, who was a man of "aspiring vein," mentioned his intention of bringing his wife to London, giving her a glimpse of fashionable life, and leaving her in town while he went to witness some grand hawking exhibition, which was to take place on the Rhine. Accordingly, having, on the 31st of May, had two wills drawn up, by which they left their property to each other, and witnessed by a farm-steward and a shoemaker, Mr. and Mrs. Belany left home, and, on the 3rd of June, took up their quarters at the Euston Hotel. Next day, however—that is, the 4th June—they hired rooms for three weeks, at Mile End; and when they removed thither that afternoon, Mrs. Belany appeared in perfect health, and in the evening went out to a theatre. Next day, the 5th, Mr. Belany ordered his wife a black draught, and she was sick all day; and dating from the Euston Hotel, as if still there, he wrote to a friend, saying she was "rather unwell from the fatigue of travelling." On the 6th she seemed to have quite recovered—went out in the morning with her husband, and amused herself in the evening with a piano. Yet, on that day, he wrote that she was "unwell, and attended by two medical men, who were apprehensive of a miscarriage." On the 7th, again, she appeared in excellent health.

On the previous day, however, as it afterwards turned out, Mr. Belany had gone to a surgeon whom he knew at Stepney, to say that he was in the habit of taking prussic acid medicinally, but that he could not get it genuine, and therefore requested his acquaintance to procure some. At the same time, he ordered acetate of morphine and other drugs; and the articles were sent.

At length the fatal day, the 8th of June, arrived. It was a Saturday, and before seven in the morning, the landlady of the house heard Belany and his wife conversing cheerfully. At seven, Belany, ringing the bell, ordered a tumbler of hot water and a spoon. Half an hour later, the servant, being in the parlour dusting the furniture, as usual, he asked her to leave, as he had some letters to write, and would ring when he wished breakfast.

The girl did so; but ere a quarter of an hour elapsed, he shouted for assistance, and the landlady, running up stairs, found Mrs. Belany on the bed, lying on her back insensible, with her eyes closed, and foaming at the mouth. "For God's sake, do something," said she to Belany; "I've seen my own girls in fits, but nothing like that." "It is no fit," he replied, "but disease of the heart, of which her mother died twelve months ago." The landlady then urged to send for a doctor; but Belany said he was a doctor himself. Ultimately, a medical man was summoned; when he appeared, he found Mrs. Belany dead, and said there must be an inquest.

While matters were in this state, Belany wrote to a friend in the North that his wife was still unwell, "that one of the medical men pronounced her heart to be diseased"; and this letter, as was afterwards shown, must have been posted as late, at least, as the evening after her death.

On the morning of Monday, the 10th of June, the Coroner's inquest was held, but the inquiry was adjourned for the purpose of a post-mortem examination; and thereupon a sufficient quantity of prussic acid was found in the stomach to cause death. On the evening after this examination, Belany and some other persons called on one of the medical men to inquire the cause of death; but the latter gave an evasive answer; and Belany coming again, told a queer story. He had, he said, been in the habit of taking prussic acid medicinally; and had been bothered with a bottle of it, out of which he could not get the stopper. In trying to do so, he happened to break off the neck, and pouring the prussic acid into a glass, in the bedroom, went for a moment into the parlour. While there, he heard a shriek, and on his hurrying back, Mrs. Belany said, "Oh, dear! I've taken some of that hot drink; give me some water." Belany, being questioned as to what was done with the bottle, said he had got rid of it in some vacant ground. After making this statement to the medical man, the wretched individual wrote a variety of letters, giving the same account of the affair to his familiars.

The consequence of all this was, that Belany was apprehended and tried at the Central Criminal Court, on the 21st of August. He was perfectly calm and collected; he pleaded, "Not guilty." The trial lasted for two long days. There existed no doubt, of course, as to the cause of his wife's death; and the question was, whether prussic acid had been taken by mistake, from being incautiously left within her reach, or whether Belany had been guilty of the capital crime of administering the poison. The jury, admonished that to allow twenty guilty men to escape was less objectionable than to condemn one who was innocent, returned a verdict of "Not guilty." Belany, having heard the result without any manifestation of feeling, bowed slightly to the bench, and withdrew.

"After having been tried and acquitted," says Maxwell, "in the pride of his innocence, he sought the *domus*; though the *placens uxor* was wanting. No ovation awaited him; for, most perversely and irreverently differing from a learned judge and an enlightened jury, the North Sunderland fishermen, on the evening of his arrival, hanged their distinguished townsman in effigy before his own door. To hang Mr. Belany a person was ultimately resolved upon; and, next evening, the whole *posse comitatus* of the town, with a regular apparatus, repaired to the abiding-place of the doomed one. Mr. Belany, however, declined the intended honour, and, leaping through the back door, escaped strangulation for the nonce. Irritated at losing time in rigging a gallows for which a tenant was not procurable, the Northumbrians turned their fury on the house."

"Touching Mr. Belany's subsequent history and adventures, little, I believe, is known correctly. Some say he has been gathered to his fathers; others, that he has migrated to the Continent."

POISONING FOR BURIAL-FEES.

FEW persons, we imagine, have ever bestowed the slightest attention upon criminal statistics, or even read in the most casual way the accounts of the more serious crimes committed from time amongst us, without having been struck by one astounding fact—a fact so wonderful, and, at the same time so deplorable, that were there not so many well-authenticated instances to prove it, it would be utterly incredible. We allude to the trifling nature of the inducements which have so often sufficed to lead to murder. Sometimes a matter of a pound or two—nay, of a few shillings even, has been enough to cause the wilful sacrifice of human life. We have met with cases where a brutal murder has been committed for the sole object of gaining possession of the clothes the victim wore, and the

instances in which persons have been poisoned by friends and near relations for the sake of some paltry sum of money, payable at their death, almost defy calculation.

To an ordinary mind, the idea of comparing any sum, however great, with the value of a single human life, would seem preposterous and absurd. Yet in no end of cases do we find an amount which would hardly seem temptation enough for the commission of a petty larceny, inducing persons not only to risk forfeiting their own lives on the scaffold, but to dismiss all human pity from their breasts, and watch with fiendish satisfaction the sufferings of those bound closest to them by the ties of nature, as they sink beneath the fatal power of the poison administered by hands that should have cherished and protected them. Even the holy love of mothers for their children, the instinct that seems the firmest planted in all female bosoms, has in how many instances been sacrificed for the sake of a few shillings to be paid down to them upon their murdered babes' coffins!

A few years since, the community at large was horrified by the discovery of frequent murders, committed for the most part by mothers on the persons of their own children, solely in order to obtain the miserable sums paid by the "Burial Clubs" for funeral expenses, when any of their members died. It had, indeed, horrible as the statement may appear, become a regular system; the lives of children were bartered for these burial fees, with little more compunction than a grazier would exhibit in disposing of his flocks for the shambles. So frequent were these murders, that people began to look upon these burial clubs as positive incentives to infanticide, until, by the strong force of popular opinion, the societies were for the most part done away with. Yet, in their principle, the burial clubs were not more objectionable than any other form of life assurance. They had their origin in the universal prejudice in favour of a "respectable" burial—a prejudice which some have sneered at, but which is, for all that, deeply rooted in most human hearts, and is by no means the most mischievous of human weaknesses. In order that the members of these clubs might, when the last scene of life's drama was played out, escape the degradation of a pauper's grave, they voluntarily deprived themselves of certain comforts during life, and from their savings raised a fund which should enable their surviving relatives to inter them decently when they were gone. It was simply life assurance upon a minor scale, the only difference being that, in ordinary life assurance, the sums received upon the death of the assured are generally somewhat large, whereas in burial clubs the sum paid to the members' relatives seldom exceeded a few pounds. Yet for sake of this wretched gain, mothers would destroy the lives of their own children, wives murder husbands, husbands kill their wives!

Poisoning was the usual mode of death resorted to, and from the large number of cases in which the crime was detected, and that, too, very often after the victim had been long since buried, without anyone's suspicions being aroused, it is terrible to think how many more may have been murdered that we have never heard of—nor ever shall until the grave reveals its secrets. How many may have fallen victims to the fiendish cupidity of some loved and trusted relative; may have been buried without question; the fees for their interment—the price of blood, for which the deed was done—paid unsuspectingly; while surgeons, if called in at all, called in too late either to save the victims, or to form the least suspicion of the foul work going on, unhesitatingly certified their death from natural causes.

We have been at some pains to collect a few out of the many cases of poisoning which occurred between the years 1846 and 1851, when the system of burial clubs was at its height, and in which the inducement to commit the deed would seem, as we have said, so preposterously out of proportion to the enormity of the crime, that we could hardly credit them were they not well authenticated.

For instance, we read of a married couple, named Pimlett, who in the year 1846 resided at Runcorn. They had three children, all of whom they had entered as members of a burial society. Upon the 6th of March, in that year, one of the three, an infant, died; a second died upon the 21st of the same month; and on the 27th of April following, the third and only surviving child became violently ill. A surgeon saw this child, and he at once suspected something wrong. Accordingly, he communicated his suspicions to the Coroner, who caused the bodies of the other two children to be exhumed, and chemically examined. The result of the examination was the discovery of a considerable quantity of arsenic in the body of each. It was also ascertained that arsenic had been likewise administered to the surviving child; and the evidence given in the matter clearly established the fact that the mother had poisoned her two children, and had attempted to poison the third, for the sake of obtaining the wretched sum paid by the burial club upon the death of any of its members.

Again, another case of wholesale poisoning, in which the sole object of the murderess was to obtain money from a burial-club, occurred at Barnetby-le-Wold, near Brigg, in Lincolnshire, in the month of June, 1847. A married woman named Mary Ann Milner, was tried upon three separate indictments charged with the wilful murder of three persons, all connected with her by family ties, the victims being, respectively, her mother-in-law and two sisters-in-law. Acquitted on the first charge, and found guilty upon the second, the other indictment was not proceeded with, but the murderess was sentenced to death, and left in Lincoln goal for execution. The sentence, however, was not carried out; for, owing to the negligence of the gaolers who had charge of her, she managed to escape the scaffold by committing suicide in her own cell a few hours before the time fixed for her execution. But, before doing so, she confessed the justice of her condemnation, admitting that she had poisoned all three of the persons with whose murder she was charged. Mary Milner, the mother-in-law of the prisoner, was the first victim. She was a member of a funeral club, which allowed £10 to the relatives of a member dying. £5 of this was paid over to the prisoner immediately upon the death of her mother-in-law, for the purpose of burying her victim; but it would seem that there was an obstacle to her obtaining the whole sum, as the poor woman had a husband, who would, of course, be entitled to it. The prisoner, however, had foreseen this difficulty, and provided for it. The husband also had arsenic administered to him as well as the wife, but not with like results. He did not die, but was nevertheless reduced to a state of hopeless imbecility from the effects of the poison. The evidence given in the case of the sister-in-law does not say anything about her being in a burial society, as well as the mother. The inference seems to be, that the two younger women were poisoned for the same reason as the husband—to prevent their taking any share of the money to be received from the burial club. Three murders actually accomplished—four attempted—for a £10 note!

One curious feature in this case, and one that is generally met with in all similar cases of poisoning for burial-fees, calls for a brief remark. It is the gross bungling manner in which the murders are committed. In the first place, arsenic, the most easily detected of all poisons, is the one almost universally employed. Nor is that all. As in most cases of the kind, so also in this, the poison was purchased in the immediate neighbourhood of the criminal's residence, from a shopkeeper, who, according to his own evidence, "had known the prisoner some years." There seems to have been little or no attempt to conceal the fact of the purchase of the arsenic—so important a link as it is, too, in the chain of evidence. A simple statement to the effect that it is bought to destroy rats or mice, "and not to poison anybody with," (as this prisoner told the shopkeeper) appears to have been all that was considered necessary to disarm any suspicion of the contemplated crime.

Indeed, it would almost seem as if the utter disregard of the value of human life, which alone could lead to murder in such cases, served in some way to make the murderer blind even to the importance of his or her own safety—so little trouble or ingenuity do they exercise to conceal their guilt. The poison is frequently administered, too, with the same want of caution. This woman, Milner, simply mixed the arsenic for her mother-in-law in a cup of sage, and for another of her victims in a pancake; in both cases it was well known that she had prepared the poisoned food with her own hands, and the remains of both were simply thrown away where any one who chose to look for them might find them.

In the months of August and September, 1848, an investigation was carried on which occupied considerable time, and served in no slight degree to increase the fearful notoriety which the county of Essex had at that period acquired from the many cases of poisoning which had been discovered there. The matter under investigation was the death of Thomas Ham, a blacksmith of Tendring, near Thorpe. Ham was a young man, and

had been in good health till within two months of his death. He died after two days' illness. His wife had been repeatedly heard to threaten his life, and had openly declared her wish that he might die, as she preferred another man to him. Her husband did die, and in a very few days afterwards the widow married her paramour. Suspicions were, of course, aroused, and the body of the deceased was examined by Professor Taylor, who discovered in it fifteen grains of arsenic—a quantity sufficient to kill five people.

It was stated that the wife of Ham was instigated to the crime by a woman named May, who was executed at Chelmsford, for poisoning her own brother, a few weeks only before the murder of Ham was committed, a singular instance of the effects of capital punishment in deterring others from crime. The fate of her old companion seemed to exercise but little influence upon Mrs. Ham. This woman May, it is said, "left a confession, by which a clue has been obtained to a deliberate system of poisoning (we quote the published account), existing in this district, and practised by a large number of women for the purpose of obtaining the fees paid by the 'Burial-Clubs,' or as they are here called 'Death-Clubs,' on the decease of their husbands and children."

An appalling case of wholesale poisoning, for the sake of burial-fees, was discovered at a place called Guestling, near Hastings, in the year 1849. A woman, named Mary Anne Geering, poisoned her husband and three grown up sons, all of whom were members of the Guestling Benefit Society. It seems that, in this society, upon the death of any member, every other member subscribes one shilling towards the funeral. There were upwards of one hundred members, so that Geering's widow received more than £5 upon the death of each of her victims. Her husband was the first. He died suddenly, on the 13th of September, 1848. His widow applied to his club for burial-money, which was paid without any suspicion being excited as to the cause of his death. On the 27th of December following, George Geering, one of the woman's sons, died, like his father, suddenly. Again the club was called upon, and again the burial-money paid. Another son, named James Geering, died on the 6th of March, and his burial-money was paid over, in like manner, to the mother. Not satisfied, however, with the deaths of three members of her family, the wretched woman, it appears, made two attempts upon the life of her surviving son. He was seized one day with violent sickness, in the same manner as his father and his brothers had been taken ill. Taking warning by their fate, however, the young man obtained medical assistance, and recovered. But it was only to be again submitted to his unnatural mother's attempts. Very soon after he was taken ill once more, in exactly the same way, and this time the surgeon detected arsenic in what he threw off his stomach. The key thus found to the mystery of sudden deaths occurring constantly in this devoted family, it was not long before the poisoner was arrested on the charge. The bodies of her husband and two sons were disinterred, and it was at once discovered that they had all been poisoned. The evidence given upon the trial, though entirely circumstantial, was conclusive, and she was pronounced guilty, and sentence of death was passed upon her. She listened to the sentence with apparently but little emotion; but, after her removal to the condemned cell, the spiritual admonitions of the chaplain awakened her to a consciousness of the terrible guilt she had incurred, and she made a full confession of her crimes.

She was executed on the 21st of August. A newspaper paragraph at the time said, "In consequence of the fearful revelations made by the numerous trials for poisonings which have recently taken place, as to the inducements to crime held out by the burial clubs, these societies have been almost totally abandoned in all parts of the country."

In the month of March, 1850, a woman, named Anne Merritt, was convicted at the Central Criminal Court of poisoning her husband, James Merritt. The deceased was a turncock of the East London Waterworks Company, and, with the exception of a slight cold, appeared to be in good health. On the 24th of January, he was seen in the yard of his house retching violently, when he said he had been drinking some broth and a cup of hot tea upon it, which he expected had made him sick. He continued affected with painful thirst and sickness, and had some gruel, which his wife made for him. In the afternoon he died. It appeared that a few days before her husband's death, the prisoner had been talking with a neighbour respecting the death of an acquaintance, a member of a burial club, upon whose death his widow had received £7 10s. Upon which the prisoner said, that if anything happened to her husband, she would be entitled to the full benefit. The evidence clearly established the fact of his having been poisoned by white arsenic. She was sentenced to death; but a petition was got up in her behalf, and her sentence was commuted to transportation for life.

In the month of July, 1850, William Ross, a youth of nineteen, was convicted, at York, of the wilful murder of Mary his wife, by administering to her arsenic, in treacle. In this case the inducement to commit the murder was the sum of £4 6s. 6d., to be paid at her death from two burial clubs, of which she was a member. He had been heard to say to his wife, "Thou's worth more dead than quick," alluding to the fees to be paid on her death. Immediately after her death, he sent for the burial club money. He was executed for his crime in front of York Castle.

We have already stated that the county of Essex had obtained an unenviable notoriety from the number of poisonings cases occurring there. One woman, residing at Clavering, in that county, indeed, was looked upon in the village as a professional poisoner. Her name was Sarah Chesham. She had been tried at the Chelmsford Assizes, in 1847, upon a charge of poisoning the illegitimate child of Lydia Taylor, but acquitted. In 1848, she was again tried for poisoning two of her own children; but, although the evidence was most cogent, and left very little doubt of her guilt, she obtained a verdict of acquittal upon that occasion also. She was subsequently implicated in another charge of poisoning, and again escaped justice; and the woman May, whom we have already mentioned as having instigated another woman to murder her husband, declared, after her own condemnation, that she had herself been originally instigated to the commission of murder by Sarah Chesham. Finally, in September, 1850, the notorious poisoner, Sarah Chesham, was once more arrested, at the instance of the Secretary of State, on the charge of having murdered her husband, Richard Chesham, by administering to him arsenic. It may well be imagined that, with the terrible notoriety the prisoner had acquired in the village, where there was much gossip about poisoning, and "how bad husbands could be got rid of," suspicion was readily excited when the woman's husband died. The Coroner resolved upon one more attempt to unravel the mystery of this secret and diabolical system. The contents of the deceased's stomach were analyzed, and arsenic was found therein. In a cupboard of the house was found a bag of rice, which proved to have arsenic in a small proportion mixed up in it, raising a suspicion that the murder had been perpetrated by the administration of minute doses. Before the Coroner's jury there appeared to be a great deal of prevarication with a view to screen the prisoner. A woman named Phillips, gave, with great hesitation, highly incriminating evidence, on which the prisoner declared that the fact was that Phillips had applied to her for a poisoned pill. The prisoner, who went by the nickname of "Sally Arsenic," seemed to have studied the action of the poison deeply. Indeed, her previous trials, by enabling her to hear the medical witnesses upon the subject, served merely as lessons to her how to administer the poison with the least fear of detection. Dr. Taylor, of Guy's Hospital, who analyzed the stomach of Richard Chesham, said, in the course of his evidence, "that he had been examined upon the previous trial of the prisoner, and he, upon that occasion, in her presence, described the nature of arsenic, and its mode of action." So Chesham, acting upon the information thus received, accomplished her last murder in a much more artistic manner than any of her others. She was, however, found guilty, sentenced to death, and executed on the 25th of March, 1851. Since this period, owing to the legislative enactments against the sale of poisons, and from the circumstance of burial clubs having fallen out of favour among such of the agricultural population as had no taste for poisoning their nearest relatives, this class of crimes appears to have greatly decreased.

THE RUGELEY NUMBER OF THE PRICE TWO PENCE.

ILLUSTRATED TIMES



RUGELEY, FROM THE SOUTH, LOOKING TOWARDS THE RAILWAY.

THE RUGELEY TRAGEDIES.

If any of our readers should think a justification necessary of the course we have this day adopted in making familiar to the public eye the various scenes connected with that fearful series of tragedies which, within this past few weeks, have sent a thrill of horror throughout the land—it they think we are to blame for having transferred to our columns these speaking likenesses of that hitherto obscure circle of individuals, whose names have been on the lips of almost every man, woman, and child in the three kingdoms since the first intelligence of these tragedies became bruited abroad—to them we reply, that we conceive in what we have this day done we have only fulfilled the office that devolves upon us as the conductors of an illustrated journal. We cannot agree with that squeamishness which allows long wordy descriptions of places and individuals to be perfectly admissible, and which refuses to tolerate those productions of the pencil, the skilfully indicated lines of which are more suggestive than columns upon columns of the best-written descriptions. Does even one of our readers believe that “The Times,” or any other of the Morning Journals, would not readily avail themselves of the means which we possess and make use of, were it only possible to adapt them to the exigencies of a daily newspaper?

The labour that we have been for weeks engaged in, and the results of which are now before the reader, was not entered upon with the idea of pandering to a mere vulgar curiosity. Our object was to lay bare a great social vice, which is gnawing away at the very core of society, and which every day shows to be rapidly on the increase—namely, the fearful amount of gambling in human life for the sake of pecuniary gain. Any one who scans these columns with attention, will approve the spirit in which we have performed our task.

We shall now proceed, without further preface, to give a *resumé* of the more remarkable circumstances connected with the Rugeley tragedies since these were first brought to light. We shall, in this account, use the facts, and occasionally the very words, of our contemporaries, when we find that these agree with the results of the comprehensive inquiries which we have caused to be instituted by special correspondents on the spot.

SHREWSBURY RACES — POLESTAR, THE WINNING HORSE — “BURNING” BRANDY AND WATER.

Among the strange admixture of company that thronged the Shrewsbury race-course on the morning of the 13th of last November were two individuals, both of whom appeared to be deeply interested in the results of the forthcoming race. One of these had more the cut of the gentleman about his figure and dress than the other, and had the reader seen him, he would have guessed him to have been much the younger of the two, although there was only a few years’ difference between their respective ages. He was tall and slim—his face was thin and pale, with a slight whisker, and a small, light moustache. He was a native of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, where he possessed some little property, and kept a few race-horses. Some say that his ostensible profession was that of a solicitor, and that he had offices at Watling. It is very certain, however, that he was a constant frequenter of the various race-courses in the Midland districts, both in term and out of term, and that he was not unknown at the different sporting taverns in the Metropolis. His legal practice, therefore, if any, must have been very trifling.



THE TALBOT ARMS, RUGELEY.

Among his tolerably large circle of friends he was a universal favourite, for his easy good nature and the mildness of his disposition.

The companion of this gentlemanly-looking young man, was an individual some 30 years of age, but appearing several years older. He was of a largeish build, though not more than 5 feet 7 inches in height, very broad about the shoulders, having a big head, and rather a thick bull-neck. His complexion, which was florid, gave to his features rather a coarseness of expression; his scanty hair was of a lightish-brown, and was worn brushed back. The top of his head was almost bald. There was nothing of the sporting man about his style of dress, for he was clad in a black suit, and his hat was encircled with a broad mourning band.

Were the reader a connoisseur in matters of the toilet, his educated eye would have detected the true provincial cut about this person’s apparel, which gave him perhaps more the appearance of a gentlemanly farmer than of a practitioner of the science of medicine, which he really was. He had a pleasant nod and an agreeable smile for almost everyone; and yet, despite this apparent cheerfulness, he must have been sadly wretched at heart, for he was at that moment involved in deep pecuniary difficulties, which threatened, unless his “book” on the forthcoming race turned out well, to deprive him of house and home, and banish him for a time from the society of his fellow turfites, of which he seems to have been passionately fond. Need the reader be told that the younger of the two individuals, whose portraits we have attempted to sketch, was John Parsons Cook, and that his friend was William Palmer, the sporting surgeon of Rugeley?

Cook’s horse, Polestar, entered for the — Stakes, won. The owner was naturally enough elated with his triumph, for, as happens at all races, a good deal of money changed hands, and Cook’s pocket-book was crammed full of bank-notes. Good fellow as he was, he gave a dinner at the Raven, at Shrewsbury, on the 14th, and treated his guests to foaming beakers of provincial champagne. After indulging freely in the foreign wines of an English country town, 150 miles from London, the owner of Polestar took to brandy and water to restore his British solidity. Tossing off his glass, he complained that there was something in it which burned his throat. That night he was very drunk, and very sick, and very ill. His money he deposited with his friend Ishmael Fisher, a sporting wine-merchant of Shoe Lane, Holborn. To him he gave £700 to keep till next morning, expressing his belief, at the same time, that Palmer had “dosed” him for the sake of the money. If such had been Palmer’s intention, would he have left Cook at such a moment? He neither followed him from the room when his stomach rebelled, nor did he go near him all that night. This neglect showed, indeed, how hollow was his friendship, but it almost proves his innocence. Guilt would have been much more officious. All this, it must be remembered, happened on the Wednesday. “On Thursday morning, the 15th,” says Mr. G. Herring, “Mr. Cook came to my room while we were waiting for breakfast. He drew me to the window, and began speaking to me about money and racing matters. During the conversation the name of Mr. Palmer was mentioned, but I cannot recollect by which of us. I remarked, ‘How about that brandy-and-water you had?’ And he replied, ‘Oh, that villain did me. From the pre-



THE MAYPOLE, RUGELEY.

vious conversation I remarked, 'You mean Palmer?' and he said 'Yes,' I then observed, 'It's a very serious thing to accuse a gentleman of such a thing; what could be his motive?' and he replied in a sorrowful tone, 'You don't know all.' He then continued talking about racing matters, and I interrupted him by saying, 'Good God, if you suspect this man of such a thing, how can you go back and breakfast with him?' He again replied, in an absent manner, as he was walking towards the door, 'Ah! you don't know all.'

COOK AND PALMER AT RUGELEY—COOK'S ILLNESS—THE PILLS— A DEATH-BED SCENE.

In spite of what we have narrated above, Cook and Palmer were very soon friends again, and brother sportsmen. In the afternoon they started together for Rugeley, where Mr. Cook engaged a room at the Talbot Arms, exactly opposite to the snugery inhabited by Mr. William Palmer. Thursday seems to have been a *duo non*, but on Friday Mr. Cook dined with his friend, returning to the Talbot in a state of perfect sobriety. On the following morning he felt giddy and uncomfortable. He threw up a cup of coffee administered by the chambermaid, and afterwards a basin of broth sent by Mr. Palmer. On Monday morning he was better, and able to eat something, but he still lay stretched on his yellow-curtained bed at the Talbot Arms. The same day William Palmer, it appears, hurried up to London, to get his friend's accounts settled with respect to Shrewsbury races. Mr. Herring, to whom Cook had hinted his suspicions regarding the brandy and water, called on Palmer at his town lodging, 8, Beaufort Buildings, Strand, in compliance with a letter received from Palmer that morning. "I inquired of him," states Mr. Herring, "how Mr. Cook was; when he said, 'Oh, he is all right; the physician has given him some calomel, and recommended him not to come out, being a damp day;' and added, 'What I want to see you about is setting his account,' holding out half a sheet of note-paper. I rose slightly to take it, when he said, 'You had better take it down,' tearing some letter paper, and pushing it towards me at the time, with pen and ink, saying, 'What I have here will be a check against you.'

Mr. Herring, it appears, held three £200 bills of exchange, one drawn by Mr. Cook and accepted by Palmer, the others drawn by Palmer and accepted by Cook. One of these had been settled at Shrewsbury; the remainder were now paid and cancelled. The various sums to be received amounted to £1,020, but of this £110 was refused, on the plea of a set-off. He therefore wrote word to Mr. Cook, at Mr. Palmer's, Rugeley, to the effect that he had not been able to remit £350 he was to have sent to Mr. Padwick, but that he had duly sent a cheque for £450 to Mr. Pratt, the lawyer usually employed by Palmer in his monetary transactions. A telegraphic reply was directly returned by Palmer from the nearest station to Rugeley, requesting him to advance the amount necessary to make Mr. Padwick all right, and that he should be repaid on the Thursday. Mr. Herring prudently declined. Subsequently, when the original memorandum sent by Palmer to Colwich was sought for, it appeared that his influence had availed to procure its restitution. Consequently no legal proof exists that it was in his handwriting.

On the Monday night Cook took two pills, which made him excessively ill. He screamed wildly, rolled his eyes about, and beat the bedclothes with his hands, while his head moved convulsively, and his limbs soon after straightened. Mr. Palmer, being sent for in haste, gave him some comforting words, two more pills, and a thick, dark-coloured draught, which smelt like opium. The sick man vomited almost immediately, but there was no appearance of the pills, and presently he fell into a refreshing slumber. The laudanum, if such it was, had been administered in too large a dose for the state of the stomach after so much irritation—otherwise it might have soothed him into a sleep from which there would have been no awaking. During Tuesday, the 20th of November, Palmer, known not to have any large practice, goes to a chemist's shop in Rugeley, and buys 6 grs. of strychnine, and 2 drs. of prussic acid. In the afternoon of the same day, Mr. W. H. Jones, a surgeon of Lutterworth, and a personal friend of Mr. Cook, arrives to look after the sick man. Old Dr. Bamford, aged 82, had been called in before, and had prescribed two opiate pills, which Mr. Palmer himself had from him. Mr. Jones slept in the same room with his friend; the foot of the beds were opposite to each other, the room being sufficiently large, and Mr. Cook lying between the door and the window. A little after eleven Mr. Palmer went across and gave the sick man two pills supposed to be morphine; vomiting ensued, but the pills remained on the stomach. About midnight Mr. Jones undressed himself and turned in. He had not lain down above twenty minutes, when his friend called to him in alarm, and begged that Mr. Palmer might be sent for immediately. That gentleman was by his bedside within three minutes, foolishly volunteering the remark that he had never dressed so quickly in his life before. He then gave him two pills which he brought with him, saying that they were ammonia pills—a preparation never kept ready made up, because of evaporation. A terrible scene now ensued. Wildly shrieking, the patient tossed about in fearful convulsions; his limbs were so rigid that it was impossible to raise him, though he entreated that they would do so, as he felt that he was suffocating. Every muscle was convulsed; his body bent upwards like a bow; they turned him over on his left side; the action of the heart gradually ceased, and he was dead.

THE MISSING BETTING-BOOK—THE POST-MORTEM EXAMINATION—AN INQUEST IS SUMMONED.

The chambermaid who attended on Mr. Cook during his illness, stated that she noticed a small book with a clasp to it lying on the looking-glass. Since Mr. Cook's death it could not be found. About ten minutes after he expired, Mr. Jones, the surgeon, came out of the room, and requested her to go in. She did so, and found Mr. Palmer there. He was searching the pockets of a coat, which she imagined to be Mr. Cook's, and she noticed also that he looked under the pillows and bolster. When Cook's garments were subsequently searched, only £15 was found in his pockets. With reference to the missing betting-book, Mr. Palmer coolly observed, that it was of no consequence, as all bets were now null and void.

The death of Cook was communicated to his relatives in London. His father and mother are both dead, and his relatives, who are not numerous, are on the mother's side. Palmer, when he heard what had been done, is reported to have exclaimed, "Good God! why, he has no relatives!" A Mr. Stephens, who married Cook's mother, and with whom, it appears, Palmer was acquainted, and, correctly enough, did not regard in the light of a relative, immediately set off from town to Rugeley. At one of the stations on the way down he met Wm. Palmer. This was not by appointment, for Palmer was on his way up to London. Palmer immediately took a ticket back to Rugeley, and kept in Mr. Stephens's company. Mr. Stephens took up his quarters in Rugeley at the Talbot Arms. He and Palmer appeared very friendly together; but eventually Mr. Stephens's suspicions were aroused in respect to the missing betting-book. After consulting a solicitor, a *post-mortem* examination was determined on. Palmer took part in this, and in his diary there exists an entry to the following effect:—"Attended *post-mortem* examination upon poor Cook." The result of this examination discovered no sufficient cause to account for death. One doctor thought there was congestion of the brain, though Mr. Monkton's assistant, Mr. Devonshire, positively swore that there was no extravasation of blood, nothing to produce pressure or irritation, either on the brain or the spinal cord. At this point the deceased's step-father, Mr. Stephens, cut the gordian knot, by conveying the stomach, &c., to Dr. Taylor, of Guy's Hospital, for chemical analysis. A jury was also summoned, and an inquest opened, touching the mysterious decease of the late John Parsons Cook.

THE PALMER FAMILY—LIFE OF WILLIAM PALMER—HIS MARRIAGE.
Pending the inquiry into the mysterious circumstances attendant on the death of John Parsons Cook, let us glance for a while at the antecedents of his friend and fellow-turfig, Palmer. Of course the town of Rugeley was in a state of intense excitement, and people gave free expression to the suspicions that were rife with reference to the dying moments of the unfortunate man. Palmer's fellow-townsmen were, however, more or less divided in opinion as to how far he was compromised by the facts that had oozed out. Some maintained him to be perfectly innocent; others regarded him as certainly guilty. These latter called to mind, in connection with his previous life, some very suspicious circumstances, more than one

of which, too, were of but recent occurrence. Before we enter upon these, however, let us say a word or two respecting the family of which he is a member.

In a substantial red brick house, overlooking Rugeley churchyard, there dwells the widow of the founder of the Palmer family, a timber-merchant and sawyer, who amassed very considerable wealth in a space of time so brief as seemed to reflect on the judgment or industry of his less fortunate neighbours. He is described as having been a coarse, unscrupulous, insolent, pushing fellow. He made his money by going into the timber trade, and buying up, from the neighbouring nobility and gentry, "those excrescences of nature grown by Providence to pay the debts of gentlemen"—trees. Stories are rife of his sharp practices with careless sellers and dishonest stewards and agents. A former steward of the Marquis of Anglesea is said to have been associated with him in defrauding his noble master. It is enough for our purpose to know that when he died (of an apoplectic fit) he left (to his widow chiefly, for her life, with portions to each of the sons) a considerable fortune—as much as £70,000, it is said.

Both sons and daughters had been born to this prosperous couple. One son was a lawyer, another a clergyman, a third a surgeon, a fourth a corn-factor, a fifth a timber-merchant. There were likewise two daughters; one still unmarried, and who lives with her mother, and is kindly spoken of by the poor; the other, who was married, has been dead for some time.

If all the stories rife in the neighbourhood of Rugeley respecting the doings of old Mrs. Palmer, should prove to be true, the present generation of the Palmers may plead as an excuse for any venial shortcomings on their part, that they had not the advantage of the best of mothers. Some of her letters to a man of the name of Duffy, and left by him in a portmanteau at the Shoulder of Mutton public-house, have been recently unfairly disclosed to the town, and are considered to justify the accumulated comments of fifteen years of scandal. The marriages of some of the sons were so unlucky as to increase the popular conviction that the family was not amiable. Neglect, drunkenness, and separations seem to have been the rule.

William Palmer, who was born at Rugeley, in 1821, was apprenticed when a youth to a Mr. Tylecote, of Haywood, surgeon. He had the reputation of being a wild young man, with plenty of money to spend, and with indulgent parents, who never attempted to rule him. After a time he went to London, where he became a pupil at St. Bartholomew's, and receiving the diploma of the College of Surgeons in 1846, he returned to Rugeley, to practise his profession, but patients, it seems, were not forthcoming.

There was residing at Rugeley at that time a Mr. Benjamin Thirly (the same individual to whom allusion will frequently be made in the course of this narrative), who fulfilled the duties of medical assistant to Mr. Salt, a most respectable surgeon of that place. He was familiarly known throughout the county as "Ben at Salt's." Ben had the reputation of being a capital man of business; and Palmer, thinking that if he secured him, a practice might possibly be got together, made the necessary overtures, and was successful. This act of his was not, however, generally admired by his co-professionals; and it does not appear to have effected the contemplated result, for patients still fought shy; and Palmer, in disgust, took to the turf. Ere this happened, he had taken a far more important step—in other words, he had secured himself a wife.

More than twenty years since a retired Indian officer pitched his tent at Stafford, with a low, vulgar woman, who was at once his housekeeper and mistress. He was a Lieutenant-Colonel, and his name was Brooks. The name of the housekeeper was Mary Thornton, and she, it seems, was subject to wild fits of ungovernable passion. The old Colonel, evidently a man of feeble mind, though strong appetites, would flee from her anger to a neighbouring tavern, and there seek refuge till the storm had blown over. Not unfrequently, however, she would track him to his retreat, and drag him home in ignominious triumph. Indeed, as it is naively remarked in the neighbourhood, "he might as well have been married." One night the old Colonel was found lying dead upon the floor—a recently-discharged pistol by his side. This was in 1834. By a will dated July 27, 1833, he bequeathed to Anne Thornton, the illegitimate offspring of his liaison with his housekeeper, nine houses at Stafford, besides land, and the interest of 20,000 sicca rupees, for herself and her children; and appointed Dr. Edward Knight, a highly-respectable physician of Stafford, and a Mr. Dawson, her guardians and trustees. To Mary Thornton, the mother of Anne, the Colonel bequeathed certain property, which was to pass to the daughter at the decease of the mother.

Anne Thornton is reported to have been painfully sensible of her own false position as an illegitimate child, and it is said that she was habituated to look upon herself as an outcast—a being of an inferior order—one who should be deeply grateful to any man who would bestow his name upon a creature unrecognised by the laws, and tainted from her birth. Her first love was unpropitious. But the fountains of that great deep, a woman's heart, had been broken up. The ark of her existence now drifted to and fro, recklessness at the helm, and hope in the hold, until the waters of disappointment decreased, and the keel grated on the strand. Her mountain of Ararat was William Palmer.

Palmer is spoken of as displaying at this period peculiarly fascinating manners when in the society of women. This is not at all unlikely; for he appears to be one of those individuals who make up for the want of brilliant parts by the assumption of a certain superficial amiability, which causes them to be regarded as universal favourites by their own, as well as by the opposite sex.

Later in life, Palmer still preserved his agreeable manners. He was always popular with the poor, and was liked by the public generally. Since he has become a betting man he has never shown himself secretive of sporting news of value, and he seemed always glad to put money in the way of poor men eager for the excitement, *sans* the risk, of betting. These qualities obtained for him considerable influence in his own town, and in the sporting circles of the midland and northern counties. He was, moreover, what has been called a liberal man. Ask the servants at the various hotels he frequented within thirty miles of his native town, and they will invariably speak of him as "a nice, pleasant sort of gentleman." But he was never respected. Latterly, his companions have been of a low class, and he only differed from them in his temperate habits and equable tact of manner.

Palmer's marriage with Miss Thornton took place in the year 1847. His bride was under age. She was a clever, amiable, pretty, accomplished, and lovable girl, having, moreover, a clear income of £200 a year; her mother gave her besides a present of £700.

Many now speak of her almost with affection, and the poor of Rugeley still deplore the loss of a most sympathising benefactress. With such a wife, one would have thought that William Palmer would have lived in contented obscurity in his snug two-storied cottage, standing a little off the street, with its three square windows above, and one on either side of the door. At that time he was following his profession with steadiness and the prospect of success. His house was furnished with some degree of elegance; he had a handsome carriage, and was not troubled in pecuniary matters. Moreover, he had no connexion with the turf, and, altogether, was somewhat of a "catch" in this dull neighbourhood. And as he stood at his door, or at the little gate in front, his eyes must have often alighted on the legend beneath the Talbot Arms, the swinging and creaking sign of the hostelry over against him—*Humani nili obtemus*. Unhappily, his medical studies appear, by the well-thumbed pages of a work upon poisons, to have been chiefly directed to the properties of prussic acid, strychnine, and deadly narcotics; while the best-filled bottle in his surgery is said to have been one of tartarised antimony. So fond, indeed, was he of fatal drugs that he once owned a horse named Strychnine. The most fatal poison of all to himself was his love of horses—his passion for the turf. Accustomed from his earliest infancy to live among horses—for Rugeley is famous throughout the midland counties—he acquired the expensive habits and unscrupulous practices of the horse-dealing fraternity. Palmer eventually became an owner and breeder of race-horses, and betted freely and largely. "Such," say sporting men, "were his powers of 'squaring,' as exhibited in the cases of The Postboy and The Postman, that it was not surprising he should succeed in winning two Great Leamington and Shrewsbury Handicaps. The Chester Cup he brought off by accident, for the report goes that if a confiding public had taken a fancy to have backed

Goldfinder for £300 or £400 more, the intention was to have let him remain in the stable. Latterly he came out in force with Nettle and The Chicken."

The reader will not be surprised to learn that Mrs. Thornton, the mother of Mrs. Palmer, was a person of eccentric habits. She still lived at Stafford, keeping any servants, though possessed of considerable property. Some time after Palmer's marriage, he called upon her, and requested her to give him some money. He also invited her to go and live with her daughter. She refused to give him the money, and he left her much incensed. The poor woman afterwards, fearing that Palmer would ill-treat her daughter on her return home if she did not comply with his request, went to the bank, having procured £40, forwarded it to him. She is reported to have said that if she went to reside under the same roof with him, she would not be a fortnight. These forebodings proved to be true, for she subsequently was to live with her daughter, and four days afterwards she was a corpse. In accordance with Colonel Brooks's will, her property descended to her daughter, whose husband thus became possessed of a respectable income.

BLADEN'S MYSTERIOUS DEATH—DEATHS OF PALMER'S CHILDREN AND OF HIS WIFE.

The year following Mrs. Thornton's death—some few years ago—Mr. Bladen, a collector for Charrington's brewery, who dabbled sufficiently in turf transactions to make him a defaulter to his employers, came to Rugeley on a visit to William Palmer. It would seem, if public rumour be worthy of credit, that William Palmer had borrowed £400 from the sporting bagman, and it is probable that the hope of recovering this sum induced the unfortunate man to become the guest of his debtor. However this may be, he had no chance of taking it out in board and lodging. He was less than a sick he fell desperately sick, and after William Palmer and his assistant and subsequent partner, Mr. Benjamin Thirly, had exhausted their skill, old Dr. Bamford was called in to "prescribe a mixture." Nevertheless, the patient died. His wife arrived when he was already insensible, but in a few minutes she was hurried out of the room, and never again allowed to behold him—because decomposition had set in so rapidly! She was also dissuaded from carrying the corpse to London, the expense of which William Palmer greatly exaggerated. Rumour goes on to say that he latterly handed the widow a cheque for £60, and some loose cash which he had found in the pockets of the deceased. On Mrs. Bladen expressing her surprise at the smallness of the amount, her husband having left London, as she believed, with £200 in his pocket, Palmer replied that, since Bladen had been in Rugeley, he had been betting heavily, and had been unfortunate. For Mrs. Palmer was greatly agitated when she heard of Bladen's death, and exclaimed, "My poor mother died when on a visit here last year—and now this man. What will people say?"

What will people say, indeed! Beyond these deaths, there were also other grounds for suspicion. Of five children, the offspring of their marriage, four died in infancy—the last in January, 1854. Ere, too, a few short months had gone by, it was destined to be the poor mother's turn.

Although the will of Colonel Brooks would seem clear enough to any one who was ignorant of law, and although, in the present state of the law, it would be sufficient, yet it was discovered by the legal fraternity some years since, that the language conveying the bequest to Anne Thornton was not sufficiently forcible to convey it to her absolutely, but only gave her a life-interest in it; consequently at her decease, it was liable to be claimed by the heir-at-law to Colonel Brooks. Under these circumstances, there would be nothing unusual in Palmer's insuring his wife's life in order to protect himself from the inevitable loss which must ensue in case of her decease. And since her property consisted of seventeen acres of land, valued at between three and four hundred pounds per acre, besides nine houses, and the interest of the sicca rupees—probably altogether worth at least £400 per annum, upon which he had borrowed largely from his mother—there could be no doubt of his having such an interest in his wife's life as would justify insurance, though certainly not to the amount eventually effected. In January, 1854, Palmer seems to have insured her life for £3,000 in the Norwich Union, and during the following March, in the Sun, for £5,000; an insurance was also effected in the Scottish Equitable for £5,000. It appears that proposals for insurance were made to other offices, but whether these were made in case of the rejection of other proposals, which were eventually accepted, we are not in a position to say.

On Monday, the 18th of September, 1854, Mrs. Palmer accompanied her sister-in-law, Miss Sarah Palmer, to a concert at St. George's Hall, Liverpool. Here the former lady, perhaps, caught cold, and on her return to Rugeley next day she appeared to be very unwell. The following morning her husband took up to her room a cup of tea with sugar in it, but no milk, and some dry toast. Soon afterwards vomiting commenced. Whatever substance she received, tea, gruel, and once a little arrowroot, was prepared by the servant girl Eliza Thurn, but administered only by Mr. Palmer or Ann Bradshaw, a deaf old nurse subsequently called in. On Sunday Dr. Bamford (aged 82, he it remembered) was sent for, and being given to understand that the case was one of English cholera, though the patient was then suffering from constipation, he prescribed some pills containing calomel and colocynth, and an opening draught. On Tuesday evening he again called, and found that only one pill had been taken, and that the bowels were still unmoved. This was the last time he saw her. She died on the following Friday, and at her husband's request, he, without a moment's hesitation, signed a certificate that she died of English cholera. Another medical gentleman, Dr. Knight—one of the antiquaries of Stafford, he being also above 60 years of age—the deceased's very deaf guardian, also signed the certificate with equal facility. He saw the patient twice on Monday, when she was too much reduced to hold any conversation with him. However, her husband supplied the deficiency, and described all the usual symptoms of English cholera. It does not appear that he ordered anything but a small dose of diluted prussic acid, to relieve the retching, nor is there any reason to believe that he made any further inquiries on the subject till Saturday, when he heard that the poor lady had expired on the previous day. A third medical man, Benjamin Thirly, Palmer's partner, likewise saw the sick woman. It was on the day she died, and when she was so completely prostrated as to be unable to answer any questions. Thirly recommended some arrowroot and brandy, which the nurse promised to give her. In addition to the medicines prescribed by the doctors, it appears that Mrs. Palmer frequently took effervescing draughts, which were given to her by her husband. "They were given in my presence," said the nurse, "in this way:—He brought some clean water in a glass, and a spoon with some powder in it. He put the mixture into the water, and when he stirred it with the spoon it effervesced. It looked like the ordinary effervescing draughts, and Mrs. Palmer used to say that they were very refreshing, and did her more good than anything else. She took these draughts two or three times in the course of the day."

During the illness of the poor woman, her chief, and indeed only anxiety appears to have been for her little boy. When the clergyman came to visit her and to pray with her, she asked his prayers on her dear child's behalf. Of five children, the fruits of her marriage, he, the eldest born, was the only one that survived, and he had ever been to her a source of deep anxiety. Whether or not any dark suspicions ever crossed her mind as to the cause of death of her other dear babes, it is impossible to say. One lady, however, relates, that while staying with Mrs. Palmer at the sea-side, whither she had gone for the benefit of her health, speaking of her child, she one day said, "My dear boy—I hope he is safe!" and then, quickly recalling her words, she exclaimed, "I mean, I hope he is well."

Shortly after the poor mother's death, Palmer placed the little fellow, then between six and seven years of age, under the care of Mrs. Salt. When he brought the child to her, he appeared greatly affected, and, with tears in his eyes, said, "I have brought dear little Willie to you. It was Annie's desire, and I wish to carry out my dear wife's last injunction, which was to place him under your care."

The nurse tells us that when poor Mrs. Palmer was at her last gasp she rang the bell, and Mr. Palmer came up. "He did not quite come round the bed. I said to him, 'I fear Mrs. Palmer is dying.' He appeared very much hurt, and went out into the next room, and returned again directly. I think that then she was gone. After she was dead, I stayed with her twenty minutes. I went into the next room to Mr. Palmer.

appeared quite unconscious of what had taken place. I asked him to get up. Upon this he looked at me, and said he thought he had been asleep, rubbed his hands, and he appeared a little better. Palmer chronicles his wife's death in his diary in this wise:—
 Sept. 29th, Friday.—My poor dear Anne expired at 10 past 12. Nine days after he writes:—"Oct. 8th, Sunday.—At church. Sacrament." The mortal remains of his dead wife were laid beside those of her mother and the sporting bagman, in the family vault of the Palmers, in Rugeley churchyard. According to all accounts, at his wife's funeral Palmer appeared to be greatly distressed. Nine months afterwards, however, when his maid-servant, Eliza Tharm, gave birth to an illegitimate child, which died, and of which there is little doubt he was the father, people thought that this grief had been assumed for the nonce.

Mrs. Palmer being dead, application was made to the various insurance offices, who paid the amounts without a murmur, though not, it appears, without some suspicion, for it has since come out that the London and Norwich Union communicated with the Sun Office, and withholding payment until a full inquiry had been made into the circumstances attending the death of the deceased. The directors of the Sun Office, however, thought that, as three medical men had signed certificates pronouncing Mrs. Palmer to have died of diarrhoea, they would not be justified in postponing payment. Acting upon this impression, the Norwich Union and the Scottish Equitable thereupon paid the money. Nevertheless, suspicion was rife in the town, and the matter was even hinted at by sporting men far away from the county of Stafford. One old Yorkshire trainer was heard to observe at the following Epsom Meeting:—"Ho! noa going to win Oakes as lo! poison'd wolve." At Newmarket, too, where Palmer, as a betting man, was well known, an old man, some months since, in answer to an inquiry about Palmer, observed, "What do you mean Palmer, of Rugeley? Oh, yes, I know him; the man whom the little boys in Rugeley say poisoned his wife. Mind, it's only the little boys in Rugeley say so; I don't."

PALMER'S BROTHER WALTER—HIS HABITS—HIS ILLNESS—THE INSURANCES ON HIS LIFE—THE BOTTLES OF POISON IN THE STABLES OF THE JUNCTION INN—WALTER PALMER'S DEATH.

Palmer had a brother named Walter, possessed of his own unhappy taste for racing and betting. He succeeded the father in the business of the timber-yard, which had been the foundation of the old man's fortune, but in the hands of the son it turned out a losing concern. Devoting more time to his betting-book than to his ledger, he failed both as a corn and timber merchant, and became bankrupt in 1849. His wife was a Miss Millicent, a ladylike and accomplished person, still most prepossessing in appearance, the daughter of a Liverpool ship-builder and possessed of an income of £150 a-year. Her sister had married Mr. Joseph Palmer, and strongly dissuaded her from entering such a family—of course, in vain. The union was an unhappy one, owing to her dissipated habits. While residing in the Isle of Man, he had a streak of delirium tremens, during which he attempted to cut his throat. With great reluctance Mrs. Walter was compelled to separate from him, though they seem to have been always tenderly attached to one another.

In December, 1854, less than three months after his wife's death, William Palmer appears to have entertained the design of insuring Walter Palmer's life for no less a sum than £42,000. Proposals were made to six offices with this view, as follows:—

The Solicitors' and General	£13,000
The Prince of Wales	13,000
The Universal	13,000
The Indisputable	14,000
The Athenaeum	14,000
The Gresham	15,000
Total	£82,000

Of the six proposals above-mentioned, there is evidence that four of them, at least, namely, the Solicitors' and General, the Prince of Wales, the Universal, and the Indisputable, were introduced directly or indirectly by a Mayfair solicitor, named Pratt. The Prince of Wales office accepted, and he gave his check for £710 13s. 4d., receiving back £108 12s., as commuted commission. A Mr. Greville, a solicitor in St. Swin's Lane, brought the proposal to the Universal office, and told the Secretary (Mr. Impey) to send the acceptance paper to him, and the policy and the renewal notices to Mr. Pratt. Mr. Greville also requested Mr. Impey to allow him to withdraw the proposal if the directors of the Universal resolved to decline it. The proposal referred to Mr. Waddell, surgeon, of Stafford, as medical referee, and to Mr. Cheshire, the postmaster of Rugeley, as a friend who had known him for some years. Mr. Waddell reported Walter Palmer to have been, on the 5th of April, "healthy, robust and temperate," but added in a note, under the head of "Opinion on the Life"—"Most confidential. His life has been rejected in two offices. I am told he drinks. His brother insured his late wife's life for many thousands, and after first payment she died. Be cautious." The proposal to the Indisputable Office originally came through a Mr. Webb, who said that a friend of his, a solicitor in Old Boswell Court, was requested by Pratt to get an insurance effected somewhere for about £14,000. Mr. Robertson, the secretary of the office, said he would make inquiry, and inquiry having been made, the proposal was declined. The united premiums upon the six policies, taking them all round at 25 9s. per cent., the per centage charged by the Prince of Wales Office, would amount to £4,469 per annum, a sum which it was very improbable that William Palmer could have paid, considering that he had to get a bill for £1,500 discounted by Pratt, to enable him to pay the premium on the Prince of Wales policy. On the 31st of January Pratt wrote to William Palmer, stating that he had got the £13,000 policy from the Prince of Wales, and that it was now all right. In other letters to Palmer he cautions him against pressing on the other insurances too fast, adding, "What would the Sun or Norwich Union say (these offices had not then paid the claims made upon them in respect of the death of Mrs. Palmer) of your speculations, if the Solicitors' and General Office were to offer them any of the risk?" The proposal was made to the Gresham on the 28th of July last; but the office refused to accept it, unless upon the condition that no claim should be made, under any circumstances, for five years.

In April last, while these assurance proposals were flying about like hail, Walter Palmer removed from Earl Street, Stafford, to Castle Terrace, close by the Railway Station. A man named Thomas Walkenden received some 30s. a week to live with him. Walkenden's chief business seems to have consisted in supplying his friend and master with gin. Sometimes there was a cask in the house, but more frequently a bottle was procured as required. The average consumption exceeded a quart per diem, and a bottle, perhaps, three quarters full, was placed by his bedside every night, with a water-jug and a glass. Not unfrequently the wretched man would toss off half a tumbler of raw spirits at a gulp, and then turn quite black in the face. At an early hour of the morning Walkenden found him a cup of coffee, which he would swallow and cast up again. Then he would "set himself up" by drinking three or four glasses of gin and water. He was constantly complaining of pain all over him, but particularly under the shoulder-blade; he also coughed every morning very freely, and expectorated a great deal.

Walter Palmer was very anxious to have his life insured, as his brother had promised to lend him a sum of money as soon as the insurance was effected. He had no idea, however, of the amount of the proposals that had been sent in. Mr. Waddell, the surgeon, who very properly gave the confidential caution to the Universal Office, says—"I met him out walking about the middle of July last, when, in a conversation I had with him on the Castle-knoll, he stated that he owed his brother William £400, and he wished to repay it; that I had prevented him insuring his life several times; that I must be aware his habits were entirely altered; that he then only drank three glasses of bitter beer in the day, and that he ate like a 'thresher.'"

On the 3rd of August, Walter Palmer went to Liverpool and saw his wife, and remained with her for five days, keeping perfectly sober while his bottle-holder was no longer at his elbow. He returned on the 9th, and went to Rugeley, and spent the day with William Palmer. On Sunday, the 12th, Mr. Day, the surgeon, called upon him, and found William Palmer there, and Walter Palmer intoxicated. He called in the afternoon

of the same day, when the door was opened by William Palmer, who said that his brother was so noisy and intoxicated as to be unable to see him. On the following day, William Palmer went to the Wolverhampton Races. On the Tuesday Walter also went to Wolverhampton, accompanied by his evil genius Walkenden, and met his brother on the race-course. William Palmer has the following entry in his diary:—

"14th August.—Went by Stafford to see Walter; came home by gig from Wolverhampton."

George Whymann, assistant to Mander and Co., wholesale chemists of Wolverhampton, tells us that William Palmer came to their shop on that day, between a quarter past twelve and a quarter to one o'clock, and purchased an ounce of prussic acid and some other articles of him. This statement Palmer firmly denies, as may be seen by the engraved fac-simile of his letter given on another page. Strange to say, the "bottle" at the Junction Hotel, Stafford, states that on this day Palmer gave him two bottles, wrapped up in white paper. "I could tell from the feel that they were bottles. They were about four inches long. He told me to keep them till he asked for them again, and not to expose them to the air. He came afterwards, on the same day, and fetched them away. He was away about an hour, and when he came back he told me again to take care of them. He said nothing more that day. He called the next morning and asked me for them again. I brought them down to the stable to him. He took one of the bottles out of my hand, and, taking a very small bottle, about one and a half inches high, he poured a little of what was in it into the larger bottle, and then back into the smaller bottle. Mr. Lloyd, the landlord, came in when we were there, and I walked out of the stable door and left them together. Mr. Palmer only took the very small bottle with him, and left me the others to keep for him. In the evening he came again, and told me to put the bottles in his gig."

The landlord of the Junction says that he remembers going into his stables on Wednesday, the 15th of August, and seeing Palmer there with the "bottle." "Palmer was in the act of pouring something out of a small bottle into a large one. The large bottle was about as large as an ounce or two-ounce bottle. The contents of the small bottle were white like water. I said, 'Good morning, Mr. Palmer; how is your brother this morning?' He replied, 'He is very ill indeed; he is very weak and low indeed.' He added, 'I am going up to see him, and take him something which will stimulate him. Dr. Day is attending him, but he is not so well acquainted with his habits as I am, and taking his drink away from him and giving him medicine will not do for a person who has been in the habit of drinking, and I hope this will do him good.' He also said, 'He went, very foolishly, to the races yesterday, and it might have been the death of him, from the state he was in.' He continued to say, what a sad thing it was that people would injure themselves by drinking themselves to death. On the Saturday previous, William Palmer came to me and asked me for a bottle of the very best old brandy for his brother. He took it away with him, telling me that if his brother wanted any more, I was to let him have it, and he would pay for it."

This scene with the bottles, it must be recollected, transpired on the Wednesday. Now let us see how Walter Palmer was going on in the meantime. On his return home from the races on the day before, he was quite drunk, but Walkenden did not let him supply him with gin to drink in the night. All next day, Wednesday, he was in liquor. Mr. Day called to see him, but was told by Walkenden that Walter was at the races. Walkenden has since admitted that Walter Palmer was not at Wolverhampton races, but was at home, and did not go out all day. As regards William Palmer, he slept at Rugeley on the night of the 15th, and left home the following morning, stating that he was going to Ludlow races. He did not, however, go to the races, but went to Walter Palmer's house, at Stafford, where he received, in the course of the day, a telegraphic message from Mr. Jeremiah Smith, a solicitor of Rugeley, and a very intimate friend, stating that a horse of his (Palmer's) was likely to win the Ludlow stakes. This message, directed to Palmer at the Stafford station, showed that Smith was cognisant of his movements throughout the day.

It was exactly thirty-two minutes past two o'clock when this message arrived. At that very moment Walter Palmer, who had been drinking hard for the previous six-and-thirty hours, drew his last breath, his brother William and Walkenden being at his side. Twenty minutes previously he had been suddenly seized with an attack of apoplexy. Ere his brother's corpse was cold, William Palmer commissions the "bottle" at the Junction Hotel to take a message to the Stafford railway station to be telegraphed to London requesting a friend to lay £50 on a particular horse—most probably his own horse entered at Ludlow; for, at a quarter past four, despite the melancholy event that had transpired so recently before his eyes, his anxiety as to the results of the race is such that he sends this message to the clerk of the course—"Pray, Mr. Frail, send me word who has won the Ludlow Stakes."

WILLIAM PALMER VISITS WALTER'S WIFE—SENDS THE INSURANCE POLICY TO PRATT—THE OFFICES REFUSE PAYMENT—MAKES A DEMAND ON WALTER'S WIFE—PROPOSES TO INSURE THE LIFE OF GEORGE BATE, ESQ.—MORE "HOT" BRANDY.

Walter Palmer died on the 16th of August. The next day his brother William proceeded to Liverpool to make the wife of the deceased acquainted with the melancholy event. She naturally asked him why he had not written or telegraphed to her, for up to this time she had been in ignorance of her husband's illness even. To this Palmer replied, that Walter told him he could write himself if he wanted her. Mrs. Palmer says she proposed to go off to Stafford instantly to see her poor husband before he was buried, but William Palmer observed that they had been obliged to close him up in lead, and that her going would be of no use, for she could not see him. Under the head of the 27th of August is the following entry in Palmer's diary:—"Went to Stafford with George and Tom to follow Walter to his grave at Rugeley." Walter Palmer was buried in the same grave with Mrs. William Palmer, Palmer, senr., Mrs. Thornton, William's four children, and Bladen.

Now that the brother, hermetically closed in lead, was under the green turf of Rugeley churchyard, it was time to see about the £13,000 due from the Prince of Wales Life Insurance Office. The necessary papers were accordingly despatched to Mr. Pratt; Dr. Day, who had attended Walter Palmer a short time previous to his death, but who had been refused access to him by the officious Walkenden the day before it took place, certifying that his patient died of apoplexy. This time the offices not merely hesitated, but positively withheld payment. They had been told that the insurance was intended to cover an advance made by Mrs. Palmer; but it now transpired that the assignment had been made in favour of William, in consideration of an assumed loan of £400, though the deceased had actually received no more than £60. Other circumstances occurred to excite suspicion, and the result was, that the different offices combined for their mutual defence, in case any claim should be made upon them.

Baulked at the unexpected turn affairs had taken, Palmer, who was dreadfully pressed for money, knew not which way to turn. He, first of all, writes to Walter's wife, asking her to pay him sundry sums, which he stated he had advanced to his brother. First of all, "£85 lent on the drawing-room furniture;" then a mysterious £40, which "you know all about;" next, bills amounting to £200. "I feel certain poor Walter must have told you how very, very often, and on very many occasions, I had stood his friend, and I believe I and his dear mother (except yourself) were the only friends he had on earth. I only wish his career through life had been a different one. He might have been alive, but, poor fellow, he is dead and buried, and I hope and trust he is gone to Heaven.—With kind regards, yours ever truly, WALTER PALMER."

To this letter Mrs. Palmer replies, "Poor Walter's explanation to me, over and over again, was that you had insured his life for, I think he said, £1,000, and that you had promised to advance him £500 of the money, but that you had put him off from time to time, and were just giving him a few pounds now and then to go on with until you could find means to pay him the whole. Now, if that is true, and I am much disposed to believe it, you are the proper person to pay all that he owes."

From the above, it is very evident that neither husband nor wife knew that the life had been insured for £13,000, or that proposals had been sent to different offices for as large a sum as £82,000.

As Palmer took nothing by this move, he casts about for another life

and fixes on that of George Bate, a decayed farmer, employed by him as a kind of farm-bailiff on a small scale, but whom Palmer describes in the proposal papers as a gentleman and an esquire, desirous of insuring his life for £25,000. John Parsons Cook and Cheshire, the postmaster, were the two referees. In the statement made by Bate to Inspector Field, and in the one he made to our special correspondent, the reader will find so curious particulars relating to this affair. The insurance offices by this time were well up to the class of customers they had to deal with, and they therefore engaged a detective to visit Rugeley and to make inquiries. These resulted in the proposals being declined. Whilst the detectives were on the spot, they thought it advisable to investigate the circumstances under which Walter Palmer departed this life. The inference they arrived at was, that he had been made away with, and they communicated as much to their employers. Among the different individuals they questioned on the subject, was Thomas Myatt, the "bottle" at the Grand Junction Hotel, Stafford. Palmer knew one of the officers by sight, and saw him engaged in deep conversation with Myatt. When the officers had left, he asked Myatt what they had been saying to him, and as Myatt hesitated—not being quite so ready with a cool answer as Mr. William Palmer would have been under similar circumstances—Palmer, with a view, we will suppose, of unloosing his tongue, asked "bottle" what he would take to drink. "Bottle's" favourite liquor being brandy, Palmer brought him a glass, which "bottle" swallowed, and quickly threw up again; nevertheless, he was ill for some time afterwards, and now protests that he is certain he was poisoned.

This was in the month of October; and from this time we lose sight of Palmer until we find him, a few weeks afterwards, in company with Cook, on the Shrewsbury race-course.

PALMER ATTEMPTS TO BRIBE THE POSTBOY—IS MORE FORTUNATE WITH THE POSTMASTER—TRIES IT WITH THE CORONER—IS ARRESTED FOR DEBT—IS FOUND GUILTY OF WILFUL MURDER.

If the statements current in Rugeley are to be credited, Mr. Stephens, Cook's step-father, actually started off, on his return to London, and then turned back again, and determined that the body should be opened. He communicated his decision to Palmer, and Palmer, as we have before mentioned, assisted at the examination. Mr. Stephens having made up his mind that the stomach should be submitted to analysis by Professor Taylor, engaged a fly to convey him from the Talbot Arms, Rugeley, to the Stafford railway station, intending to carry the jars up to London himself. This was on the evening of Monday, November 26. The fly was already horsed and waiting, and while the postboy who was to drive it was hurrying from his lodgings to the hotel, he encountered Palmer, who offered him a £10 note to upset the vehicle, as may be seen by reference to his own statement on another page, published in detail now for the first time. The postboy firmly refused the tempting bribe. According to rumours, which however we do not credit, Palmer was afterwards, in company with others, seen following the fly.

Mr. Stephens reached London safely, and gave the jars into Professor Taylor's custody. The same evening that Mr. Stephens started off, Palmer was observed walking about the streets of Rugeley drunk!—drunk, too, as they say, for the first time in his life!

While Dr. Taylor was engaged with his analysis, the Coroner summoned a jury together, and opened an inquiry. At the first meeting the proceedings were merely formal, the body being only viewed and identified. Palmer appears by this time to have felt his position to be a doubtful one. He had a friend in the Postmaster of the town, Mr. Cheshire, who, it will be remembered, was one of his referees in respect of "George Bate, Esq." It seems that Palmer used to place his carriage at the disposal of Mrs. Cheshire on Sundays, on which day that lady indulged in an afternoon drive, so that Cheshire owed him a good turn, this Cheshire proceeded to acquit himself of in the following fashion. Of course, from Cheshire's position, the correspondence passing to and fro between the solicitors and Dr. Taylor could be easily tampered with, and none but himself be the wiser. It was tampered with; and no doubt every letter that passed through the Post-office referring to the case was shown to Palmer by Cheshire. At any rate, we learn from Cheshire's own lips that Palmer called on him on Sunday, the 2d of November, and gave him a hint which he was not slow to take. He goes to Palmer next morning to tell him that nothing was up. Palmer was then in bed ill. Cheshire visits him again on the Wednesday, and this time with the joyful intelligence that no poison had been found,—he having opened Dr. Taylor's letter to the solicitor to ascertain that fact. "I knew they would not," said Palmer, "I'm as innocent as a baby."

No doubt this little bit of information helps to raise Palmer's spirits. All he has to do now is to make it right with the Coroner, W. Webb Ward, Esq., so on the 8th December, he writes first of all a note to Mr. Frantz, poulterer of Stafford, ordering some "nice pheasants and a good hare," and then a note to the Coroner to accompany the said game. In this latter note he lets out, that he had seen "in black and white," Dr. Taylor's statement to the effect, that no poison had been found, and he coolly enough suggests to the Coroner, that he should like a verdict, "died of natural causes, and thus end it." These notes Palmer commits into the hands of Mr. George Bate, who starts off to Stafford. He goes to Mr. Frantz, the dealer in game, who says he is a pleasant sort of the order, but will send the other things to Bate, at the Junction Hotel. Bate re-directs the parcel, and gives a lad 3d. to carry it to Mr. Ward's office. He next goes in search of Mr. Ward, whom he unearths in the smoking-room of the Dolphin Inn, which owns the only billiard-room in Stafford. George having "tipped him a knowing wink," the Coroner came out to the foot of the billiard stairs, and there received the said letter.

On Thursday, the 13th, George Bate is again wanted on a similar errand. The adjourned inquest meets on the morrow, and Taylor's evidence will then come out. Palmer is still ill in bed, and when Bate arrives, he is sent to Thirby (Ben that used to be at Salt's), to borrow a £5 note. This he came back with, but Palmer, in the meanwhile, seems to have thought the amount too little for his purpose. He therefore sets Bate to hunt for bank-notes in a looking-glass drawer. George can only see one for £50, which Palmer we suppose thinks too much, and yet it is a question of life and death with him. At this juncture, a sheriff's officer is announced. So it has come to that at last; these bills, which he had set afloat, paying as much as 75 per cent. per annum for discount, have entangled him in the meshes of the web at last. Bate is now ordered to retire while Palmer holds some little conversation with the officer. When he comes back again, Palmer hands him a letter to take to W. Ward, Esq., which he is to be sure no one sees him deliver. George did not like so much secrecy, and he asked Mr. Palmer if he could not send some one else. Palmer replied, "Why, George, as to this poor fellow Cook, they will find nothing in him; for he was the best 'pal' I ever had in my life, and why should I have poisoned him?" and he added, "I am as innocent as you, George." George thereupon goes off to Stafford. This time he catches William Webb Ward, on the road between the Station and the Junction Hotel, and there slily slips the note into his hand. Not a word passed; both of them no doubt understood each other.

The next day, Friday, Dec. 14th, was a day of deep anxiety for William Palmer. Although matters looked black enough as they stood, still, until the Nemesis, Dr. Alfred Taylor, came down to Rugeley, and threw the weight of his evidence into the scale, there was nothing more than vague, though serious, suspicion attaching to our sporting surgeon. The witnesses had described Cook's death, with its minutest particulars; the medical evidence agreed that these particulars unmistakably indicated tetanus. Dr. Taylor proved that that tetanus was produced by strychnine; and Charles Robert, in his turn, proved that he sold strychnine to Palmer only a day before Cook's death.

Palmer is summoned; the answer given is, that he is too ill to attend—perhaps the sheriff's officers feared an escape. Next day a verdict of Wilful Murder is returned, and Palmer's friend—the recipient of the "fine pheasant and good hare"—the suspected recipient of the £5 note—W. Webb Ward, Esq., coroner for Staffordshire—makes out his warrant of commitment to Stafford gaol.

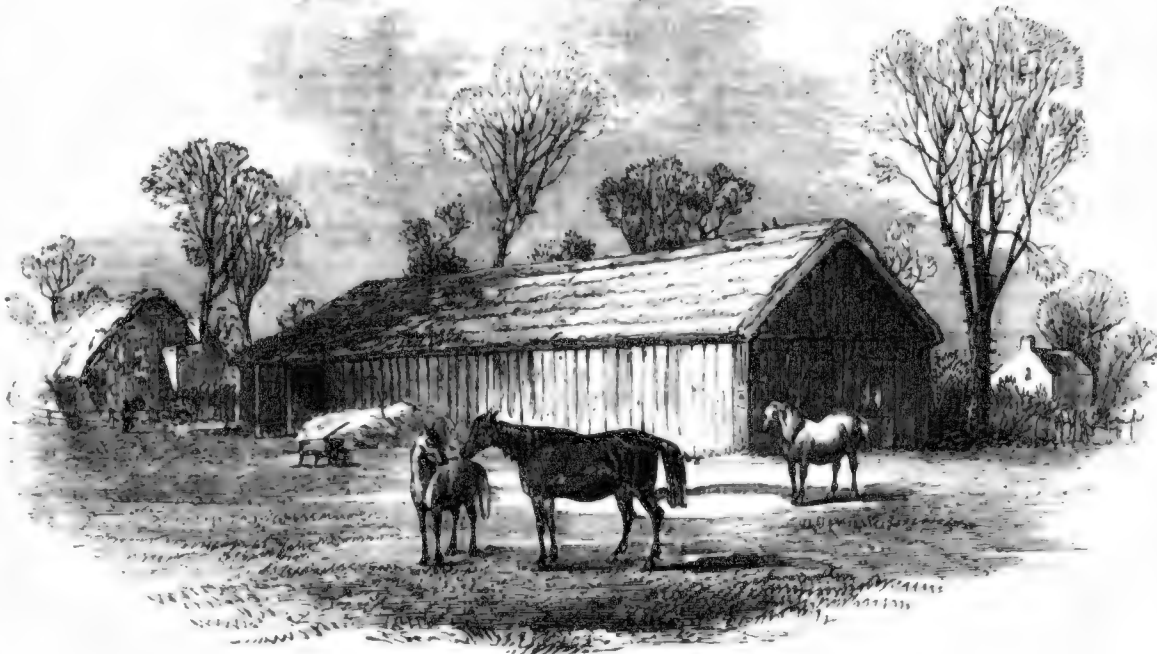
Mr. Hutton, the local police superintendent, proceeds to Palmer's house, and arrests him. He is still in the custody of the sheriff's officers; and still too unwell to be removed. A guard of police officers is therefore left behind. Every article in the room is strictly examined; and a crowd of

persons, whose murmuring voices could be distinctly heard in the miserable man's bedchamber, congregated around the house till midnight, in expectation of seeing him carried away to gaol.

He, doubtless, did not pass one of the calmest nights in that well-known room in the old familiar house where he had lived so long—that room where he had, about a twelvemonth previously, gazed, though but for a moment, on the pale features of his dead wife for the last time. What would he give now to be able to recall her—that she might whisper one word of comfort in his ear in his dire misery!—she who would have believed him innocent, though twenty juries pronounced him guilty; and, if guilty, would have brought him to repentance by the deep power of a woman's love—alas! instead of her by his side, he sees the officers of justice crowded round his bed, watching for that slight change in his disorder which will warrant them in carrying him off a prisoner.

PALMER'S FAREWELL—PALMER IN PRISON—INQUESTS ON THE BODIES OF HIS WIFE AND BROTHER—VERDICTS OF GUILTY—HIS APPEARANCE AT WESTMINSTER.

We next hear of William Palmer as a prisoner in Stafford gaol. Before, however, he was conveyed there, he took a farewell leave of Eliza Tharm, his maid-servant, throwing his arms round her neck, and requiting her illicit love with a £50 Bank of England note. Arrived at the gaol, he went to bed instantly, and resolutely refused food for several days. At last he was given to understand that it would be forced into his stomach, if he continued contumacious. This had the desired effect, and he gave up his idea of self-starvation, and from that time to the present, he has taken his meals regularly. With his restored appetite, his usual good spirits appear to have returned to him. He is no longer reserved, but converses jocularly with the turnkeys. He sees his brother frequently in the presence of the Deputy-Governor. Their conversation relates to their family affairs, which are in some confusion. No other persons have seen



PALMER'S STABLES FOR HIS BROOD MARES.

Soon after Palmer's arrest, a solicitor of Birmingham arrived at Rugeley early one morning, and demanded admittance into his house, in virtue of a bill of sale for £10,500, given by Palmer in the spring of the present year. The request was refused by the superintendent of police, who was in charge of the papers and other things in the house, and an entrance was subsequently effected by breaking a pane of glass and opening a window. Since this time, the whole of the furniture has been sold by public auction. His stud of race horses was removed to Tattersall's, where the sale realised about £1,000.

Rugeley has a town hall, with its justice-room in the upper storey; a literary institution and a savings' bank on the ground-floor. It has three or four London-looking shops, and a hundred countryified ones. There are butchers with only half a sheep as their stock in trade; grocers that sell bread, and tailors that keep stays and bonnets for sale. It is a very curious little overgrown village, and too pretty to be abused. Soon after you leave the railway station, and have crossed the bridge to the flour mill, and left Mrs. Palmer's house and the two churches in the background, you come to the Talbot Inn, now a noted building, and almost



MRS. PALMER'S HOUSE.

him, except solicitors or their clerks, who have called to serve him with writs, several of which he has had since his incarceration. He walks daily in the yard, accompanied by one turnkey, and attends chapel every morning, and twice on Sunday, accompanied by his companion. He converses freely going to and returning from chapel, and has his usual smile upon his countenance; he is dressed in black, and always carries a Bible and Prayer-book in his hand. At chapel he and the turnkey use the seats appropriated for convicts, at the end of which there is a table like a communion-table, whereat both sit.



PALMER'S HOUSE, FROM HIS GARDEN.

Within the last few weeks the bodies of his wife and brother have been exhumed, and, after several adjourned inquests, verdicts of "Wilful Murder" have been returned in both cases. With respect to Mrs. Palmer, there is no manner of doubt but that she was poisoned by continual doses of antimony. We refer the reader to Professor Taylor's very interesting statements on the subject. No poison was found in the body of the brother; the lead coffin, and the length of time that had elapsed since his death, were sufficient to account for the evaporation of all traces of prussic acid—supposing that this deadly poison had been used to destroy Walter Palmer's life.

The body of Cook has also been exhumed for further medical examination and analysis; and that of Bladen is to be subjected to a like test.

On January 21, Palmer appeared at Westminster as a witness on a trial in which Padwick was the plaintiff, and Palmer's mother the defendant. The action was to recover the amount of a bill of exchange for £2,000, which bill apparently bore the mother's acceptance. She was called to deny the handwriting—other members of the family deposed to the same effect. Clerks in banks, and solicitors, were agreed that the bill was a forgery. Palmer, it seems, had put this bill into circulation, and he was at length called as a witness. The scene was dramatic in the extreme—the court was crowded to suffocation, and most of those present were nervous with excitement, in their eagerness to obtain a view of this individual. The door of the judge's private room was thrown open, and Palmer appeared in court in the custody of an officer. He entered the witness-box in a perfectly cool and collected manner, surveyed leisurely the crowded audience, to some of whom he nodded in a familiar way, and appeared to fix his attention on some person located near the learned counsel who conducted the plaintiff's case. He was then sworn, and in a low yet firm and distinct voice, answered the following questions put to him, betraying not the least hesitation or trepidation, and not at all moved by the gaze of the audience, collected together to obtain a glimpse of an individual of such great notoriety.

Mr. Edwin James, to the witness, handing him the bill of exchange: Is the signature "William Palmer," as the drawer of that bill, in your handwriting?—Palmer: Yes. And you applied to Padwick to advance you money on it?—I did. Who wrote Sarah Palmer's acceptance on it?—Anne Palmer. Who is she?—She is now dead. Do you mean your wife?—Yes. Did you see her write it?—Yes.

The witness was then removed in custody of the officer. At this startling denouement, the counsel for the plaintiff saw no other course open to him than to retire from the case. A verdict was therefore returned for the defendant, and Palmer was hurried back to jail.

ruined from the circumstance of the bodies of Mrs. William and Walter Palmer having been opened there. The poor landlord is dreadfully distressed at having lost his business, and passes the day with his hands in his pockets, roaming about the large stable-yard at the back of the house, or in relating to the one or two friends who still drink their ale with him, the history of his misfortunes.

At the bend of the road, near the half-timbered cottage, is the shop of the only person who has benefited by Palmer's ill deeds—Mr. Keeyes, the undertaker, for he has had the job of getting up all the funerals.



MR. EDWIN JAMES, PALMER'S PARTNER.



DR. BAMFORD OF RUGELEY.

THE RUGELEY POISONINGS.

(By our Special Correspondent.)

THE TOWN OF RUGELEY.

RUGELEY is a long straggling town of small houses, kept very clean, and occupied by persons extremely anxious to do in the world. It is not so large as Twickenham, and seems to have been built up without a parent design beyond the white bricklayer. Commercial travellers say it is a good place for business, that the accounts "are partly safe." It certainly is a peculiar place, with its cottage shops and red-brick houses, with large bay windows and big shutters. To those who like bustle and crowded pathways, of course the country quietude of the town would be oppressive and denigrating. But to us there is a certain charm in the deserted thoroughfare when the only persons to be seen are the housewives at the windows, behind the row of geraniums plying the needle, whilst the husband is working in the fields. We prefer to hear, from the other end of the street, of Mr. Wright's hammer ringing the anvil to the rumbling of bus and cab wheels under our windows. The young lady on the hot pony stands on the footway of bricks, close to the shop-door, and giving her orders to the baker's wife, turns nobody's head, for nobody is out walking, and yet there are plenty of idle hands, hard working people who are earning their day's hire at Bladen's brass-foundry or Hatfield's manufactory.

You are now in Market Street, where the new post office is, which two dashing young gentlemen have come down from London to manage, in the stead of Mr. Cheshire. Already you perceive in the distance the sign-board of the Talbot Arms Hotel swinging over the stone steps before the entrance door. Mr. Masters has also benefited somewhat by Palmer's iniquities, for he gets all the customers now. Give the first boy that passes a penny, and he will point out to you the room where Cook died.

The Talbot Arms is a bald-faced house, something like a cotton-mill outside, only the windows are too large, with an acre of backyard, surrounded by stables and coach-houses, which no doubt are filled during the horse-fair, but are nearly empty for the remainder of the year. You will most likely see an old gentleman in drab breeches and cut-away coat standing at the door, supporting himself on a stick. That is Mr. Thomas Masters, who has lived in the house for seventy-four years, and rides a brown mare, aged thirty. "We make a good bit over a hundred together," he will tell you, if you like to go and chat with him.

William Palmer's house is in front of the Talbot Arms, that stone-coloured building standing back, as if in shame, a little from the road. It will be a good time before that house lets again. The paper will peel off the damp walls, the tiles will become loose, and the bare strip of neatly-kept garden at the back be choked up with weeds, before the next tenant takes possession. We should not wonder if that house becomes haunted. However, the property belongs to Lord Lichfield, and he can afford the loss of rent.

The Town Hall occupies the centre of what we fancy must be the market-place. There is no one near the building now; but a week or two since it was crowded with excited groups, talking about the inquest then sitting. The Shoulder of Mutton public-house at that time sold many a hundred mugs of beer, whilst the landlord had to tell the story of old Mrs. Palmer's loves with the dashing young linendraper's assistant—Duffy.

Now the shops become bigger, and the stocks-in-trade more extensive. The bookseller's shop, with its fashionable mahogany front of plate-glass, is doing a tremendous business with papers containing accounts of the trial. His orders have been increased four-fold; and though he tells you, as he gives you your change, that "this is a sad affair," you almost feel inclined to doubt him, it has so augmented his trade.

Down the first turning to the left, where the foundries are, used to be the post-office before Cheshire was found out. It is an ugly street, like a back street in Manchester, where spinners live. The post-office is closed now; the little slit is blocked up in the black band that occupies the under sash of the window. You hear a child crying in the office, where Palmer and Cheshire used to meet at five in the morning and examine the



THE SHOULDER OF MUTTON INN, RUGELEY.



MR. HATTON, CHIEF OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY.



THIRLBY'S SHOP, RUGELEY.

letters sent by the lawyers threatening to sue old Mrs. Palmer on the forged bills. No wonder Wm. Palmer always answered them!

You pass by the other shops, and amongst them Mr. Ben Thirlby's, the prisoner's assistant. We have described it elsewhere, and don't even stay to look in at the window. Here is the crockery shop, where Palmer used to deal; there is the saddler's, where his harness was repaired; there the tailor's, where his clothes were made. Everything in Rugeley is Palmer now. Nothing else is talked of.

We come to the bank where Palmer kept his flickering account; now immense, from the sudden influx of £13,000; now down to almost nothing, from losses on the race-course. They don't seem to work very hard at country banks, for this one opens at ten and closes at three.

Now you are in Brook Street, where the horse-fair is held. It is as broad as Smithfield, and as long as Regent Street, with plenty of room for looking at the horses, even though they should chase down the road like

a cavalry regiment. The tall pole facing you is called the Maypole, and although it is as high as a three-decker's mast, it is said that boys sometimes climb up it; but it must hurt their legs, for half-way is a quantity of iron hoops.

Now we see Rugeley in its beauty. The houses on both sides are large, and comfortable, and country-looking. The trees that line the road give it a country air. The wagon before the miller's door, and the drove of sheep and cows raising the cloud of dust in the distance, are sufficient to destroy the solitude of the landscape. In the far background are the dark hills of Channock Chase framing-in the view.

Suddenly, a man, red in the face, slaps his hat down on his head, and rushes towards us. His looks are dreadful with anger. We stand our ground with an ill-assumed courage. He advances close up to us, and exclaims, "I suppose you are going to pick us to pieces again in one of your Lunnun papers." We assure him that we should like extremely to come and settle down in Rugeley for the remainder of our days—we admire it so much. He is instantly soothed, and tells us that "it is one of the healthiest places in the world, and well drained; that he had lived in it nearly all his life, and that never before had it been in such trouble." Then muttering something about Palmer, he retires home again.

Another gentleman advances, but this time he has a mild-looking, good-natured expression on his countenance, and we do not fear him.

"Rugeley, sir," he says, "is one of the prettiest places in Europe." We do not contradict him; and he continues—"The country around is most beautiful for miles. There are nothing else but nobleman's mansions and grounds; and do you think they would come down and live here if it wasn't a pretty spot? There is the Marquis of Anglesey's within four miles—the beautiful desert, as they call it—Beau Desert, with the most lovely scenery, all along the road leading to it, you can

imagine. There, in the other direction, is Lord Hatherton's park and woods, from which half the navy dockyards are supplied. Oaks, sir, as big round as cart-wheels. Then there is my Lord Bagot's; the finest woods in Europe Lord Bagot's got. Then there is the Earl Talbot's estate, and Weston Hall, and a hundred such. Bless you, sir, compared to Rugeley, Nottinghamshire is a fool to it. Then there's Hagley Hall, within a hop, skip, stride, and a jump of the town—only a mile, with the finest shrubberies in the world; and the Hon. Mr. Curzon is so kind as to allow the people of Rugeley to enjoy them. It's only this Palmer that has set people against the place, or else everybody would be singing its praises.

We leave this old gentleman, and take the nearest way back to our hotel, the Talbot Arms, which now enjoys a painful notoriety, as being the



TALBOT INN, RUGELEY.

scene of Cook's untimely death. Subjoined are the statements which we took down from the lips of the various parties belonging to the hotel. These statements bring to light many new and curious facts in connection with the tragedy so recently enacted within its walls.

STATEMENT OF THE HOUSEKEEPER AT THE TALBOT ARMS, RUGELEY. I saw Mr. Cook often when he was so ill, but I wasn't with him always, like the maid that has left. When he was dead, I saw him. He lay quite curved; seemed to be all of a ruck, like. The women who laid him out said his arms went that stiff they had to tie them down with cord to get them straight, or they couldn't have done it. Sometimes the maid who waited on him, and is now in London, would come down and tell me how he suffered. We used to hear him screaming, even in our room. I thought it was some men in the streets. I said to the servant, "What a noise those men are making," and she said, "Oh! it isn't the men; it's Mr. Cook." He used to say, "Oh God! oh God!" when he was suffering. He looked very wild with his eyes, and was irritable. He was pale, and his teeth was set, and he was quite convulsed. The night of his last



COOK'S GRAVE, RUGELEY CHURCHYARD.



THE VAULT OF THE PALMER FAMILY IN RUGELEY CHURCHYARD.

attack he was that stiff neither Mr. Palmer nor Mr. Jones could move him. The chambermaid said he used to arch up in bed on his shoulders and heels, and beat the bed with his hands. He told Palmer on that night, "I think I shall die," and Palmer told him to keep up his spirits, and he would give him something (which he did) to prevent that. Palmer seemed very careful of him. Everybody noticed how well Cook was looking with his eyes. He was constantly vomiting during the early part of his illness. His sickness was awful on the Saturday; his stomach wouldn't scarcely bear toast and water. He didn't seem to have any suspicion of Palmer; on the contrary, he quite relied upon him, and wouldn't take anything without Palmer's knowledge. He would not even take a cup of coffee without sending boots across to Mr. Palmer, to ask him if it was right. Palmer sent him nearly everything from his own house, toast-and-water and broth, and brought him jelly from London, and altogether seemed to be both doctor and nurse. He was in the double bedded room, and Mr. Jerry Smith slept with him one night. On the Sunday night, I offered for the boots to sleep in the other bed, but Mr. Palmer answered that, "No, he didn't want that, for he was much better, and could do by himself;" but on the Monday morning, Cook told our chambermaid that, about twelve o'clock, he was almost mad with being ill, and he thought he should have had to call us up. Palmer said Cook's stomach was out of order.

Cook was a nice man—ah! very, indeed. On the Monday night I was sitting up, rather late, by the fire; and it seems as if it was done on purpose, for the mind was late with her work, when we heard the bell ring, and I went up stairs. He was sitting up in bed, and looking very wild. He said, "Oh, I'm worse; fetch Mr. Palmer." I sent the boots to the timber-yard (his mother's) to fetch Mr. Palmer. I was going to light the candle, but Cook said, "Oh, take that away," as if he could not bear the light. The servant girl and Palmer (when he came) sat up with him—she until three o'clock, and he until five o'clock in the morning. Palmer gave him some medicine, which quieted him indeed. When Mr. Jones (another doctor) came, Cook told him that he "was so ill, he thought he should have died if Palmer had not given him something." Mr. Jones saw Mr. Cook was very much reduced. On the Tuesday morning, after Mr. Jones had come, Cook asked me to let him have a little jelly. I named this to Palmer, and he says, "Well, it's a very little, then." When I took it up to Cook, he says, "Well, it's a little," but he didn't eat it all, poor fellow! Dr. Jones slept in the room that night. Just as he was asleep, Cook called out to him, "Jones, for God's sake, get up; I'm going to have another fit. Send for Palmer." It had a dreadful fit then. Dr. Jones held him in his arms, lifting him up, and held him so until he died. When Palmer came in before he died Cook fixed his eyes upon him, and kept "em there until he shant them to die. But he didn't look angry; it seemed more as if he was saying, "Good-bye." Dr. Jones was "freaked out" up. He felt Cook's pulse, and, at last, he says, "It's stopped." Mr. Palmer then went over to see if he could feel or hear the heart beat, but he "saw." "It's all over," they said. I myself felt his hand, which, poor thing, was lying on the outside of the bed, and it was turning cold then. He was as I said before, all of a ruck in the bed. The doctors stood (Dr. Bamford, Jones, and Palmer), round the fire, holding up their coats-tails, and looking very sad. On the Saturday night, the next room to Cook's was occupied by a commercial gentleman, who was sleeping there. Whilst poor Cook was screaming, this gentleman began ringing his bell, and he said he wouldn't stop in his room any longer, for Cook had been screaming all night, and he never heard anything so deathly in all his life. He was dreadfully frightened, and took some brandy before he could change his room. We made him another bed, far off. The screams were so loud, and in such agony, they could be heard plainly all down the street.

THE STATEMENT OF DANIEL JENKINSON, THE "BOOTS" AT THE TALBOT ARMS.

I knew Mr. Cook well. The next day after he came to the hotel (it was on Thursday night as he came from Shrewsbury) he was took ill, and went to bed. He got up at about 12 o'clock in the day, and dressed himself and went across to Mr. Palmer's, and dined along with him. He came back to the hotel at night, and was took a good deal worse, and couldn't get up in the morning. He kept to his bed ever afterwards. The first night as his fits took him was Sunday. On the Monday Mr. Palmer went to London, and Mr. Cook got a little better in the evening. He rang his bell, and told me to go to James (the stationer), and ask him to lend him the "Times" newspaper for an hour or two. He got up and dressed himself, and sat up, talking about horses and betting, and felt a great deal better, as if he could have come down stairs. On this same Monday some jockey lads called to see Mr. Cook. They were Thomas and John Ashnell, and they sat chattering with him. As I said before, Palmer had gone to London, and when he came back, he asked who had been with him, and they told him the Ashnells, the jockey lads; and he said he was excited and a deal worse, talking on horses, racing, and things. He was with Cook about an hour, and that same night, just as the clock struck 12, Cook rang the bell; the servant went up, and she told me to run across to Mr. Palmer, for Mr. Cook was a deal worse. He was screaming awful, worse than he did ever after. I ran across to Mr. Palmer's, and I rang the first bell I come to, as hard as I could. Mr. Palmer came to the window, and I says, "You are to come across directly, for Mr. Cook is worse." I was that frightened I could scarce breathe; so regular frightened I was. So was the girl; for when she came down from Mr. Cook's room, she tumbled into a chair, and couldn't speak. She had palpitation of the heart. On the Tuesday evening, about five o'clock, Mr. Cook called me and said, "Dan, go to Mr. Palmer, and give my compliments, and say I shall be very much obliged if he would stop over." I went to Mr. Palmer's house; he wasn't there. I went to Mr. Thirly's; he wasn't there. I went to Mr. Jerry Smith's; and he was there, I suppose, for Mr. Palmer's man-servant come to the door, and said Mr. Palmer would be round directly; and I told him he was to call and bring Mr. Bamford with him, and I suppose he did so, sir.

When Mr. Palmer was coming down stairs from seeing Mr. Cook, he met me in the hall, and says, "It's a pretty game to be called up o' nights like this; now don't you come again," and he hit me on the head with his hat. He wasn't angry, and only did it in play, like. I don't know if he meant what he said; but the servant says, "We shall call you again if you're wanted." He made no answer, but went out.

About one o'clock or a little after, Cook was taken ill again, and the girls ran over to call Palmer, for I was in bed. He came over, the girls say, in a minute; instantly, like, and he remarked he never got dressed so quick in his life afore.

On both the Monday and Tuesday nights, Mr. Palmer gave Mr. Cook a draught and pills. He gave the draught in one of them medicine glasses—bigger than a wineglass, but of that description—with measures in it at the side. On the Monday night, when he gave him the pills, I was close by him. First, Mr. Palmer came over without the medicine to see how Mr. Cook was. I was outside the room, and Mr. Palmer calls me, and when I goes in, Mr. Cook says, "Why the devil don't you put the candle out." He couldn't bear no light at all, for it hurt his eyes and head. I put the candle outside the door. There was a fire in the room. After Mr. Palmer looked at Mr. Cook, he run across and brings the draught and the pills with him, and Cook took both, and had some toast and water after 'em. After he took the pills on the Tuesday night, Cook went stiff, and bowed his stomach out, and went on his head and heels like an arch.

Then, after that, Mr. Stephens (Mr. Cook's father) come down. At first they talked about burying him, and everything was very near arranged for it. But Mr. Stephens says he was hardly satisfied, and he went to Stafford about it. On the Monday week after Mr. Cook died, they had an examination, and took the stomach up to London.

On the Sunday after the stomach was took away, I met Mr. Palmer. He was just coming round the turn of the church, drunk, with a big stick in his hand. They say it was the first time as ever he was seen drunk. It was about eight o'clock. I was running, and he shouted, "Ho! ho! ho! Dan!" and I stopped and went to him. He says, "Where was you going to?" I said I was going to speak to some young girls as I knew, who was on before. He says, "Come along with me," and I took his arm; and he says, "What scandalous talk they have got about me;" and I says, "Yes, sir, they have; it's very scandalous talk, & it isn't true." Then says he, "Do you think, Dan, I should be guilty of such a trick?" and I says, "No, sir!" and he says, "Let the old—," meaning Mr. Stephens, "go to work, he'll find nothing!" and I says, "I should think not, sir!" and he says, "You call at the surgery-door, on the Monday, and I'll give you half-a-crown."

When he got home he was in the surgery for two or three minutes, and I heard him rattling among the bottles, and then I heard him making a noise, as if he was vomiting, like. Of course, when I said I never thought he could be guilty of such a thing, I meant so, because I never had the least idea of it—no more had nobody else.

AFTER COOK'S DEATH.

A lady at the Talbot Arms Hotel furnished the following details of what transpired after Cook's decease.

The day Cook died, all the gentlemen had gone to dinner at Mr. Palmer's, over the way. About 8 o'clock Mr. Palmer came, and said they wanted some of Cook's hair. Well, no one of the maids would go up and get it, so he says at last, "Oh, if you are frightened, one of you shall go up with me, and I'll cut the hair off." But even then the maids were afraid, but at last the kitchen girl went with him, and he cut off a lock as cool as possible.

When Mr. Stephens (Cook's father-in-law) arrived at the Talbot, he was dreadfully afflicted; he hung over the coffin, and cried like a child, and he said, "Oh, my dear boy, what would I have given for one hour with you!" It was only when the rage of his grief was worn off, that he began to suspect foul play. He said they hadn't sent for him, nor nothing.

He left the hotel, and when half way to London, he seems to have altered his mind, for he came back again. He told Mr. Palmer in the

coffee-room what he was going to have done, but he didn't take more than five minutes to say the words, and to tell him that if he chose he might be present and see the stomach taken out, as he had been his son's medical attendant. Then he turned round and went out.

After the body of Cook had been taken off the bed, I went up in the room, and I saw the maids shaking the sheets and blankets. I said, "Good heavens, what are you doing?" They answered, "We are hunting for Mr. Cook's betting-book, and can't find it." Then one of the girls turned to Mr. Palmer, and said, "Have you got it, sir?" and he said, "What should I have it for?" as collected as possible.

They took out the stomach in a large room, a kind of meeting-room. Palmer took hold of the jar, and moved it away on the sly. But Dr. Harland missed it, and he cried out, "Where's the jar? where's the jar?" Then Palmer was forced to say, "Here it is; I moved it away; I thought it was in your way." But he had got it close to the door when Dr. Harland made him bring it back.

On the Sunday night, Palmer went to church, and after that he went to his mother's; and, though he wasn't a drinking man, he got tipsy there. Our "boots" was going by as he came out, and he called to him, "Daniel, you give me your arm to help me home." And the "boots" said Mr. Palmer was quite unable to get along, and staggered.

After Mr. Stephens came back, and determined on opening the body, Palmer came over to me in the evening, and he asked me what Stephens had said, and a lot of questions. And then he said, "Why they should want to open the body, I don't know." So I answered, "I think they were angry at your not sending to them when Mr. Cook was so ill." And he replied, "He never was ill enough for that." And yet he had told me that Cook had said to him on the Monday night (Cook died on the Tuesday) that he thought he was dying if Palmer hadn't given him something.

Palmer never could, or would, sleep by himself alone after his wife's death. Whenever he went to the races he used to get Jerry Smith, or somebody, to go along with him. At winter and summer he usually went to bed at eight o'clock; he used to make them go up with him to the bedroom, and allow them to have champagne, or anything they liked to drink, if they only stopped in the room with him.

THE ROOM COOK DIED IN.

This is a large double-bedded room, with a long window looking out into the street. Seated close to the window here the sick man, when he rose to have his bed made tidy, could look over at his friend Palmer's house, and almost see into the drawing-room, for it is directly in front.

The tent bedsteads, with their drab damask furniture hanging stiffly around the wood work, face one another, and the light blue colour of the plastered walls, cause the beds to stand out with great distinctness.

"That's where he lay," said the maid who officiated as show-woman, "that's just the spot, poor fellow! and he was curled up just there, poor fellow! He was put in the bed near the door because it's nearer the fire, and you see the bell's handy, poor fellow. Dr. Jones slept in the other bed, and you see it was so convenient, because they could lie and look at each other. There was always a fire burning, and after he was dead, poor fellow, all three of the doctors stood round it, looking very serious, and never saying a word. It's a nice comfortable room, that's one consolation! and he had of the best, poor fellow!"

JAMES MYATT, THE RUGELEY POST-BOY.

James Myatt is the postboy, belonging to the Talbot Arms, whom Palmer endeavoured to bribe to upset the fly in which Mr. Stephens—Cook's father-in-law—was carrying the jars containing the unfortunate victim's stomach to the Stafford Railway Station, for the purpose of having them analysed in London. James Myatt's evidence in this case is of the utmost importance. This poor lad's honesty has done more to forward the ends of justice than any other circumstance that has occurred. It is to be hoped that one who has shown himself so faithful and so truthful will meet with some reward. His greatest wish is to obtain the situation of coachman or groom in some gentleman's or nobleman's family.

He is a good-looking, well-built lad, with black curling hair. When talking to you, he looks you full in the face, never moving his dark eyes away until he has finished speaking. He was dressed, when we saw him, in the usual groom's costume, drab breeches, very tight at the knee and loose on the thigh, and wore a pair of black polished-leather top-boots.

JIM MYATT'S STATEMENT.

I knew Mr. Cook well. He was a very good friend to me whenever he came to the hotel. He used to give me a shilling every night that he stopped at the Talbot Arms. Palmer knew I was very fond of him. I recollect his saying here. I was sleeping in boots' room that very night when he died, and the housekeeper come up and waked me, to say Mr. Cook was dead. I felt very sorry for him, because he was a very nice gentleman.

I had lived in service along with the sister of Palmer's servant maid, Eliza Thurn. I knowed Eliza very well. At times I used to go across there with parcels. She used to know me when I was lodging in New Street.

Mr. Cook died on the Tuesday night, and it was either on the Sunday or the Monday week following that he was opened; but I forgets which, I'm sure. I know it was a good time after, because he had begun to smell bad. It wasn't said at the time that they suspected Palmer of poisoning Cook, but there's no doubt that they did.

On the day that Dr. Harland came and opened the body for the purpose of taking out the stomach, it was my turn to go out as postboy. There's two of us postboys kept at the Talbot Arms, and one takes one job, and one the other, and so on.

The stomach was took out and closed up in the jar by about five o'clock; for it was about that time that I was in the yard, and master sent me word down to get the one-horse chaise ready.

I don't board in the house, so after I had got the harness on the horse, I asked somebody else to put him to, whilst I run round to where I lived, in New Street, and got my tea. As I was coming back again, after taking my tea, I met Mr. Palmer coming up the street. I was a running down on one side of the street, and he was a coming up on the other. He saw me, and he called me "Jim." I went to him. He asked me if I was going to drive the old chap (meaning Mr. Stephens, Cook's father-in-law) over to Stafford. I said I was. Then he adds, "They have no rights to take the stomach away from here; they hadn't ought to have took it to London; they might put anything to it they liked." I told him I did not know anything about it, or something of that sort. He said he thought it was a humbugging concern, or something of that kind, and he asked if I would upset them. "Could you upset them?" he said. I said I couldn't. He was serious over it, not laughing. I told him it would not do for me to do anything of the sort; and then he said, "Never mind, Jim; I'll make you all right." I said I could not do anything of the kind, and then he said, "Why can't you turn the deavils over? there's a ten-pound note for you if you can." Then I said I must go, and he said to me, "What's the hurry?" and then I said, "Well, somebody else will go with them, if I don't get back; and he said, "Oh, never mind if they do." He walked down the street with me, close to the door. He said I wanted to get back, and he says, "Oh, never mind, don't be in a hurry; I'll pay you if somebody else do take him." He left me at the door.

When we started from the Talbot Arms, Mr. Stephens was inside, and we took up another gentleman on the road, as accompanied Mr. Stephens to London with the jars. I had only been the road to Stafford once before, and I felt particularly nervous, for I wouldn't have had anything happen to the jars after what Mr. Palmer had said, not for a thousand pounds. Mr. Stephens had told me to drive as fast as I could, but I took as much care as I could as well, and I got to Stafford a good twenty minutes before the train was to start. I only mistook the road once, and that was on entering Stafford, and I had to ask the road to the station. When we got to the railway, I wouldn't even touch the jars, I was so nervous. The gentleman that was with Mr. Stephens carried them out himself, and I was very glad when they were there all safe.

As we were going out of Rugeley, I saw Palmer walking down the road near the Talbot Inn. The next morning I met him again, and he asked me if I got there (Stafford) in time for the train.

Whilst this affair was going on, and after the inquest on Cook was over, there was a new Boots came to live at this hotel (Talbot Arms), and the people told him Palmer, or Palmer's people, would be sure to be avenged of me, and that as he was very like me, perhaps they might make a mistake and pay him off in my stead. He was so frightened that he left his place in three days after he come. I told him he was very light-minded, and had a laugh at him.

The chambermaid as was with Cook when he died would not stop in Rugeley but low gone to London.

The following facts have since become public:—

Palmer had expected that the jars containing Cook's stomach would have left Rugeley by the four o'clock train to London. He was met on the road to the station, hurrying along, with his assistant Thirly, in the direction of the railway. At first, people thought he was going to run away

but in half an hour (after the train had passed) he was again seen in Rugeley.

After James Myatt passed Palmer walking along the footpath by the Talbot Inn, he is supposed to have been joined by two men in a fly, and to have followed after the fly. Myatt says he did not see anybody dogging him; but Mr. Stephens stated to a gentleman in the coffee-room of the Talbot Arms, that he knew he was being waylaid, and he asked the young man in the fly with him if he was frightened. The young man answered that he was not, when Mr. Stephens assured him that he was perfectly prepared, if any person should attack him; meaning, no doubt, that he was armed.

Mr. Stephens arrived at Stafford too soon for the train, and was therefore obliged to put up at the Railway Tavern until the proper time arrived. When the express was announced in sight, Mr. Stephens set out for the station, which is distant some hundred yards, and he has a strong suspicion that all the way there they were being followed. One pretended to be drunk, and endeavoured to knock up against the youth carrying the jars; but owing to the great caution of Mr. Stephens, they were eventually placed in a carriage without any accident.

STATEMENT OF MR. THOMAS MASTERS, LANDLORD OF THE TALBOT ARMS.

Mr. Joseph Masters, the bookseller, of Aldersgate Street, is my cousin. His father and mine were brothers. I shall be 74 years the next 1st of November, and I have never been out of Rugeley. I was born in this house, and bred and have been in it ever since. About twenty years ago, my hotel was a first-rate posting house. I've never been off the premises for more than a fortnight at a time. I knew Palmer's father. They said he died very rich, and he wasn't very rich when he came, neither. He died suddenly, just after he had eaten a dinner. I knew all the family when they were young, William and all of them. He (William) was always considered the most liberal of the lot. Mr. Palmer (the mother) was a fine stout lady. She was the best dresser in the town. She used to drive out nearly every day in her carriage with the livery servant.

Palmer's father did certainly get very rich in a short time. He was thought to have died worth £70,000. The timber-yard—which is empty enough now, God knows!—was full then: piled up and full! He'd make nothing of buying £20,000 worth of timber. He was a nice man, but rather obstreperous when he got a drop of liquor in his head.

RUGELEY.

MRS. PALMER'S HOUSE.

It is a handsome, comfortable-looking place, built of red brick. On one side, next the graveyard, the house is patched with a splendid ivy tree, that grows up to the very roof, and makes the walls look thick and smooth about the little window where the blind looks so white from contrast with the dark foliage. On the other side, next the canal, the house is patched with a big bulging two-storeyed bow window, made of stone. It has no business to be there, for it is not in character, and looks tawdry. It is as if some idea had struck the tenant to improve the premises. The windows have sheets of plate-glass, and gay wire blinds, and rich silken curtains, a good deal in the public-house style of "ivory." The other bow window behind has a much better effect, with its little panes, like those we see represented in the sterns of old ships, and agrees with the countryed look of the remaining portions of the house.

Over the entrance door is a white verandah big enough to be a summer-house, if there were any creeping plants about it, but it is naked and carefully painted white. The Palmers are evidently people to like the respectable look of fresh paint. The garden in front is planted with large evergreens, clipped into a round form, and having a highly stiff and cultivated look, which lets everybody know that a gardener is kept. Where the old timber-yard used to be, and what was once a large wharf, has been converted into an attempt at a sloping lawn leading down to the canal. A few shrubs have been planted along the carriage drive, but they are growing brown at the tips and look unhealthy. The old crane which once creaked under the weight of heavy timber, now rests idly at the water's edge, with a kind of wooden casing over him to keep him from the rain. A long narrow barge passes in the canal, drawn by a horse forced slantways by the strain upon the rope. The man at the helm turns round to look "at Mrs. Palmer's house," and keeps on gazing until the trees at the bend hide him from the sight.

At the other end of the timber-yard, are the remains of the late stock in trade of the late sawyer. The few planks have grown black, and are piled up together, and form a convenient roosting-place for the fowls, and for hanging up linen to dry.

If the front of the house has an imposing aspect, the back part, at least, lets you into the mystery of the attempt that has been made to obtain the admiration of the passer-by in the road. The back premises are dirty and full of dirt. The garden is uncultivated, and the mould trodden under foot until it has grown as hard as the remains of the gravel walks that surround them. A few dish cloths hang up to dry; and there are a water-but with rusty hoops, and a coach-house and stable that a London cabman would not occupy. Here the carriage was kept; here the man in livery used to put to when ordered to "come round." Nobody who saw the handsome vehicle sweeping round the carriage drive would imagine that it had just come out of such a hovel of a stable, with the black thatch dropping away, and the wood-work looking too rotten even to burn.

In this house William Palmer was born, with two churches looking down upon him, and grave stones around and about. The nearer the church, the farther from God. As he played among the tombs, he could learn that men sometimes lived, like William Cope and John Dawson, to be 85 years old before they died. He could take such reading lessons as that on the monument near the gate, with the carved letters now filled in with green moss:—

"Praises on tombs are trifles vainly spent;

A man's good name is his best monument."

OLD MRS. PALMER'S BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

Mr. Bentley, the father of old Mrs. Palmer, and grandfather of William Palmer (the prisoner), lived, as it is commonly known in Rugeley, with a female who kept a house of ill-fame near Derby. This woman, from time to time, sent Bentley with the proceeds of her house to the bank, where, instead of delivering the money to the receiving-clerk, as the property of his mistress, he entered it on the books as his own. Finally he drew out the amount, and deserting his female companion, became the owner of a farm in the neighbourhood of Lichfield, where Mrs. Palmer was born.

"THE SHOULDER OF MUTTON," AT RUGELEY.

In the market place, and close to the Town Hall, we find the "Shoulder of Mutton" public-house, kept by "Thomas Clewley," as the sign board informs us, where, until seized by the police, you could see the love letters which the youthful, fascinating, and unfortunate Duffy received from the giddy, aged, and rich Mrs. Palmer, senior.

The house is a cottage with a tall roof, from which the bedroom windows look out upon the street. Over the entrance door is the painting of an immense shoulder of mutton, only to be matched by the enormous dried hams showing through the passage window. In the shop front of the premises, the shelves are ornamented with sample bottles of wines and spirits, which at the first glance have the appearance of medicine bottles, and, until you collect your thoughts, make you fear that Mr. Clewley is dangerously ill. As a proof of the eccentricity of the landlord, we may state that in the shop front there is the plaster cast of a cow, although no milk is to be purchased on the premises, and unless the image should refer to "cream of the valley," is totally out of place, and without meaning.

The taproom looks as if it had lately been added to the other portions of the house, for it has a small slate roof of its own, and is glazed with heavy white sashes and small panes of glass, twelve to the square yard, and is entirely out of character with the remainder of the building.

Thomas Clewley himself is a very fine-looking man, with white hair and a cherry red face, that puts you in mind of "trifle" at an evening party.

STATEMENT OF THE LANDLORD OF THE SHOULDER OF MUTTON.

I am the landlord of the Shoulder of Mutton public-house. There was a strapping chap of the name of Duffy—a good-looking fellow—who used to come to lodge with me. He was rather a dull chap in the house, and he'd sit still and drink. He did not run up a very big shot. The first time he came here, Mr. William Palmer paid for him. The second time he came, Mr. William Palmer told me he wouldn't pay, so I gave Duffy the bill, but he did not pay

then; he said he should have some money coming in a day or two. Soon he went out of the house without saying anything, and I never set eyes on him again. We gave him three or four years for coming back again; but he didn't come, and his boxes began to smell very bad, my missus opened 'em—there was only a lot of dirty shirts and things. He hadn't no clothing what he had on his back. In the trunks I found some letters, not put by any care, as if they were particular valuable, but just careless. They were only courtin' letters, and were from Mrs. Palmer (the old lady), written to me. I should think Duffy was about forty years old, and Mrs. Palmer was from about fifty-five to sixty. She has sons now as is above forty. I think Duffy was in the line of duty. I never paid no more attention to him than that he was a traveller. The police has been here and got Duffy's traps. The letters finished off with loving and kissing. They made appointments to meet at a many different places; but I was in no way interested in their loves, and I never troubled my head about it: it was the women as exposed the whole business—nobody would have seen 'em or known anything about the matter if it had not been for them. I should have burned 'em, or kept 'em, but I never charged sixpence a head to see 'em, I only showed 'em for a way in which they came to be seen was this—My Missus got speakin' of one or two young chaps came here and gummed the Missus. They spent one or two shillings in grog to have a look; then come another and another, and at last I took 'em away; but the Missus got 'em again. There's no keeping the women quiet in these matters. I can't say how many letters there was—they was mixed up with tradesmen's bills, and that sort of thing.

PALMER'S HOUSE IN RUGELEY.

Exactly opposite to the Talbot Arms Hotel stands the house in which Mr. Palmer—then William Palmer, Esq.—now Palmer—lived and carried on his business of doctor and racing man. It is a two-floored dwelling, with broad, modern windows, and faced with what builders call "rough cast" painted stone-colour. It is a comfortable place for an honest man to live in, and has, so says a neighbour, "some capital roomy rooms at the back."

It is not such a large house as that of Mr. Bennett, the shoemaker next door, nor has it so many outbuildings as those at "the Bell," on the other side; but it has been painted and done up, and has a more "genteel" look, as if the surgeon wished to make some difference between his residence and the shops around. It has evidently been built as a superior kind of dwelling, for it stands back a few yards from the footway; a bit of turf, not larger than a billiard-table, and a few evergreens, being enclosed by the iron railings in front.

Between the two front windows is the street-door, on which is still the brass plate of "Mr. William Palmer, Surgeon," but now grown rusty and dull, since Liza Tharm has given over attending to it. Close against the party-wall of the Bell is the entrance to the surgery, with the knob of the night-bell sticking out from the door-post. All the shutters are closed, and as people pass, they look up at the windows, and point the rooms out to each other. "I've had many a glass of champagne in that room," says one. "That's where the devil used to sleep," says another; and all, cursing him, pass on.

The large window to the left of the door was that of the drawing-room. Here were "the handsome chimney glasses," and the fine-toned semi-grand pianoforte, on which poor Mrs. William Palmer used to accompany herself when singing—"for she was quite a singer," as the people say. The room was well furnished. There was, to quote the words of the catalogue, the "rosewood couch, with spring seat, squab, and pillow, in blue damask, and the six elegant rosewood chairs en suite, and the very handsome mahogany bookcase, with plate glass and sliding shelves," that Mrs. William used to sit and look at the long evening through, when her husband left her so much alone, and was away at the race meetings.

The window to the right, on the first floor, belongs to the room in which the amiable and unfortunate lady expired. There she lay, extended on the "handsome German bedstead, with panelled foot-board, carved cornice and fringe, and figured damask hangings," with the half conviction upon her that her husband had taken away her life, and fearing for the fate of the poor boy of seven she was parting from for ever. Did Palmer ever sleep in that bed again? Did he see no other figures on the damask hangings besides those worked by the loom? It is known that he never would sleep alone from the time his wife died, and, perhaps, the pictures of his conscience forced him to make that partial confession of his guilt.

Palmer had a good cellar. He was a man who won hearts, and what begins a friendship so soon as a bottle of good old port? "He never drank himself, but he liked to see his friends enjoy themselves." In the dining-room at the back, where, against the wainscoting, hung the portraits of "Marlow, the jockey," and "Goldfinger, the winner of the Derby," Palmer, seated on the plush velvet seat of one of the "Elizabethan carved oak chairs," would press the jovial group to try just one more bottle. Here it was that he thought "that just one glass of weak brandy-and-water wouldn't hurt Mrs. Thornton." Here, also, he sat and laughed with Bladen, passing round the bottle of "Fletcher's old port," and joking about heel-pats!

When the sale took place, Palmer was found to be possessed of 222 gallons of ale, and 67 dozen of port, and 43 gallons of spirits. He had more bottles in his cellar than in his surgery. He had 800 in the one, and only 137 in the other; but what matter where they were kept, since they were all equally employed in his drugging business?

At the back of the house stretches out the garden, which covers some half acre of land. It is well kept up—"in very good fettle," as a labourer called it. The low hedge that divides the court-yard from the garden is clipped with care, and the small garden in front of the stable, with a little bit of imitation rock work, "to spruce it up," has been attended to, even very lately. Palmer appears to have been a man who did not much care for flowers. He was more fond of leeks and spring onions, of which there are at least six beds. Cleanliness he liked, and so he kept his house well painted, and his garden in order. A little patch, some 20 feet long and eight feet wide, is all the space he devoted to his flower garden. The beds, cut out of the turf, are arranged in curious shapes, such as stars and lozenges, but beyond a few roots of pinks and drooping wallflowers, he has not attended to its floriculture.

In the court-yard before the stables, Palmer's love of horses has caused him to have every improvement introduced that was useful and good. The large tank is of slate, and the rain water flows into it, for he was too much in the society of grooms not to know that soft water is necessary to the animals' health. In one corner next the pig-sty a manure tank has been sunk, into which the slush of the stable and piggery drained, and there is a pump to raise up the liquid as it was required for the cultivation of the garden. The house is larger than could be imagined from its frontage. The dining-room runs far back, and has a little bit of grass and a few beds of flowers arranged before its window.

There is a stable and coach-house, with a pear tree against the bricks, and has a horse shoe nailed to the door. The hay loft is open, but all the hay and straw has been sold; and what is left the wind seizes hold of, and tosses about in the air.

The whole of the building is locked up. Not a window but the catch is turned over the sash to prevent the curious from raising it, not a door but the bolts are drawn and the lock fastened. The place seems to have been lately painted and done up. The whitewash is excessively clean, the pale palings have been freshly pitched, and the woodwork repaired.

There are all the evidences of the house having been lately occupied. The brickwork partition outside the kitchen door, where the coals are kept, is still half full, and the old scuttle, in which they were carried into the house, is quietly rusting itself away into powder. On the top of the coal heap is the wooden top of an oyster barrel with the card nailed to it, and the printed portion of "Lynn's oyster and fish warehouse," and the addition in ink of "7 paid," are still fresh and new. Old rope mats turned out of doors as worthless, and a broom-top with the hair worn off, lie rotting in the yard.

Following the walk down the kitchen garden, where the clothes' poles and the cord along them form a kind of imitation telegraph, we come to a bed of rhubarb, just pushing with its new stalks and pale green leaves through the black mould. The bed is covered with manure, as if Palmer prided himself on his rhubarb. Here is also to be found the first bed of leeks. A gooseberry and raspberry plantation of some forty trees is well kept and pruned. The fruit trees trained against the wall have not a bough loose.

From Mrs. Bennett, the next-door neighbour, we heard that the sale of Palmer's goods, which, according to the catalogue, was to have occupied three days, was passed over between a morning and a night. "The sale was too hurried," this lady said. "If they had brought the things out into the open air, they would have fetched much more money; but they didn't give the bidding time. If it had been a nobleman's sale, there couldn't have been more folks there. They came from Birmingham, and all round about. The books were almost given away. Loads and loads of things went off from here to Birmingham. The furniture was very good indeed."

We wonder who bought "the handsome mahogany German bedstead, with panelled foot-board, carved cornice, fringe, and figured damask hangings!"

CHARACTER OF PALMER.

A gentleman in Rugeley, evidently a person of more than ordinary observation, furnished us with the following particulars respecting Palmer's general character, and the intimacy existing between him and Cook:

I don't think Palmer was the clever man the world takes him to be. He was rather a cunning and cold man. He was a man that never drank, but I don't think he was what I call a deep man. He could sit still and bite his nails, and listen to the conversation of others, and surmise plans of his own, but they were not of that deep character which you could suppose of a man in his position. Palmer was never drunk in his life. He was a perfectly sober man, kind and generous to all around, and his kindness disarmed his most near and dear friends as to suspicion. He was affectionate to his family, to his mother in particular; and a very many poor men (labourers) will long have reason to regret the present circumstances.

With respect to the betting transaction at Shrewsbury, between Palmer and Cook, the report of Palmer's owing Cook money was wrong, as it is without doubt that they went part and parcel in the whole of the bets as to Polestar. Cook mortgaged Polestar for £550, and prior to that he had £100 of Palmer, and £100 of Palmer's mother, in bills of exchange; therefore it cannot be said that there was any particular motive in Palmer destroying the life of Cook for the sake of gain, his life not being insured.

Cook never suspected Palmer for a moment of doing him wrong. I have heard Cook speaking of Palmer before he was taken ill, and after he was ill, in the most friendly terms. Cook returned from Shrewsbury races, and came to look after me. He found me out, and he told me that on the course he was like to have been poisoned. I asked him how that happened. He said that he could not say whether it was the eating or the drinking, but they took something which made him and Palmer, and Myatt, the saddler in the town, all very sick. Cook said he should stay in Rugeley until the Monday, when he should go and settle at Tattersalls; afterwards he should return into the country, and have a trial with Polestar and Palmer's Chicken, for the Chester Cup. Cook never complained to any person in Rugeley from the time of his return to Rugeley to the hour of his death, that any unfair means had been used to injure him in any possible way.

Palmer was a hospitable man. He would give very good dinners, with champagne and the best in the house. He only had three or four companions; but he was thought to be a humane man. The clergyman never called to see him upon a case of charity but he'd give him a guinea.

No thoroughly did Palmer's friends believe in his innocence, that when he was arrested by the police, a familiar companion of his, who was in the room at the time, was about to seize the officer by the throat, declaring that he would never allow Palmer to be taken away on such a diabolical charge.

Another gentleman told me that—

Jerry Smith (the lawyer) saw him on the morning after his conviction of the murder of Cook. He sent to see Jerry. It was sometime before Jerry could make up his mind to go; for, as he said, the news made him fall sick. At last, when he recovered himself, he entered the room. Palmer was surrounded by policemen. Jerry, pointing to them, said, "William! William! how is this?" Palmer could not answer him, but the tears trickled down his cheeks. Thus, the police say, is the only time they ever saw him affected, or betray any symptoms of emotion.

MR. THIRLBY'S SHOP IN RUGELEY.

Mr. Thirlby—or, as he is called, Ben Thirlby—was formerly assistant to Mr. Salt, the surgeon of Rugeley, and had been with that gentleman for about nineteen years, when William Palmer, knowing that Thirlby had great influence with the poorer classes of the inhabitants, coaxed the old assistant away from his employer by offering him a higher salary. This circumstance, however much it may tell against William Palmer, has nevertheless no weight against the character of Mr. Thirlby, who, of course, had a perfect right to "do the best for himself," and if Palmer was willing to pay more than Salt after nineteen years' service, surely the assistant was justified in thinking that his talents were not properly appreciated by his former master, and to go over to the new and admiring one.

Ben Thirlby's shop at Rugeley is situated in Lower Brook Street—where Upper Brook Street is, nobody knows. Mr. Thirlby's association and friendship with William Palmer have influenced the public mind, not only against the assistant himself, but also against his shop.

Taken as a country chemist's shop, it is not at all a bad one. It has been described as having a great display of rupture bandages, and one large jar full of broken poppy heads; but this is wrong. It is a small shop, with folding-doors between the windows. On one side is what is evidently a consulting-room, for there is a high wire blind half way up, and another linen one ready to pull down, and complete the perfect secrecy of the chamber. There are a couple of chemist's bottles filled with red and yellow water, to make a show, and throw out coloured lights at night from the window, and there are also half-a-dozen cod-liver oil bottles, which have gone thick and white with the cold. Underneath these bottles are the much-spoken-of bandages, curled up in a heap, with their round knobs of wash-leather ends pressed cleverly together, like letter-springs. A jar of rhubarb and another of magnesia, with the Royal arms on them, fill up the other window.

Inside Ben Thirlby's shop there are a multitude of bottles, all carefully kept clean and bright, and filled with every variety of coloured medicines. At the end are a row of blue jars, standing as if in drill, at the most exact distance one from another. Above them are three rows of bottles, yellow and pink. Those which contain the pink and yellow lozenges appear to have a kind of pastrycook's look about them, which is instantly corrected by the showy druggist appearance of their neighbours in the third storey, with the black letters on the gold label on their bosoms. There are white jars full of "Acid Tart." and "Soda Sulph." and "P. Sagetta." There are other bottles, too, relieving the monotony of the shop by the variety of the coloured liquids they contain. There is the light cinnamon hue of the "T. R. Cardam. Co." and the dark black of the "Tin. Myrrae Co." and the brilliant clearness of the "Sp. Aether Co."

In a glass case on the counter are to be found those additions to the toilet table, which Ben Thirlby thinks he is likely to sell in Rugeley. He has speculated in two bottles of Rowland's Kalydor, as well as in hair oil, and a great many tooth-brushes. He also thinks Harvey's sauce a selling article, as well as farinaceous food for children, and wax matches.

Ben Thirlby seems to do a very good business, from the look of his scales and pessals and mortars. The assistant behind the counter keeps on entering items in the ledger and taking down the different bottles one after another in a manner that is proof positive that Ben Thirlby is a thriving chemist. And so everybody in Rugeley says he is.

RUGELEY CHURCH.

Rugeley is a small place, and yet it has two churches—the one a "handsome fabric," kept like best clothes, to be used only on Sundays, and the other an old neglected ruin, a kind of every day building, very picturesque and interesting, that, like an old servant, is allowed to keep its "place" because of past services. The "handsome fabric" cost a great deal of money, and is kept up in style, with gravelled walks leading to its oaken doors, and the turf about it well swept and trimmed. The deserted ruin is now nothing more than an old square tower, with empty holes for windows, that look deathly, as the hollow eyes of a skull, and a large patch of ivy clinging like rags and tatters to its bleak gray sides. What remains of its chancel has been roofed in with boards and turned into a Sunday-school, where the children sit in rows beneath and around the old tombs, and read hymns when the mistress is looking, and when her eye is turned away, amuse themselves by watching the flies crawling over the quaint marble tablet of Ralph Weston, or the curiously carved monument of Johannes Weston, "Senior de Rugeley."

The new church has an insulting air of prosperity about it, and holds its tall turret high in the air, as if it knew it owned more tombstones than its neighbour on the other side of the road. The windows are glazed with diamond panes, all free from cracks and sparkling in the

sun, and its inner doors are of red cloth, new and bright as a postman's coat in May.

The old sexton is unlocking the door, "going to light a fire," he says, and he adds that if we like we may go in too. He offers to show us the pew where William Palmer used to pray in "an audible voice," and whereas the parson from the altar read out the Commandment, "Thou shalt do no murder," was heard to respond aloud, "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law."

The interior of the church is clean, and varnished, with the brown oaken pews ranged against the whitewashed walls, and the narrow strip of matting leading to the altar. A long red curtain hangs before the huge window, and casts a warm glow upon the polished sides of the goblet-shaped pulpit.

"This is his pew," says Charles, talking in the same tone of voice as if he were at home, for he has grown accustomed to churches. We thank him in a half whisper, and advance to the oblong box, with the row of dark-covered Prayer-books and Bibles resting on the ledge in front. We take up one of the books, and open it. On the fly-leaf is written in ink:—"William Palmer, Rugeley, August 28th, 1837; the gift of his mother, Mrs. Sarah Palmer, Rugeley." Just nineteen years since he received the present! His father was living then, and the timber-yard was well stocked, and the business going on prosperously. What would the criminal seated between two policemen now give if he could call back those years?

"It was always a very good family for church attendance," says Charles Hawley; "of course they don't come now, because it's awkward to be stared at; but they was always reckoned very regular with their devotions." The Sexton opens the other books, and hands one to us, saying, "Here's some pencil notes took during sermon time."

We take the Bible, and read as follows, half terrified by the writing, "He was a teacher come from God."

Another book is placed before us, with more hastily scribbled notes:—"Means—Prayer. God's word all the means of grace. Particular means—Faith in Christ. Faith has an heavenly influence."

Wretched man! Was he acting to the crowd around, when, pencil in hand, he took down these words? Was he hoping that it would be whispered after service, how attentive William Palmer had been to the sermon? Was he using religion that it might turn suspicion from him, and ward off the punishment due to the murderer? Or did lie, in the desperation of fear, sincerely pray, hoping by three hours' worship to atone for a poisoned wife and brother? Or was he speculating upon "the forgiveness of sins?"

CHARLES HAWLEY, THE RUGELEY SEXTON'S STATEMENT.

I am the sexton of Rugeley Church. I have been in Rugeley all my life. My wife is dead, and I've got eight children. It's an odd thing, but ever since my wife died, I've been tormented to give over "bacey." I can't smoke it, but it makes me ill. My eldest daughter—that's the biggest, too—takes care of the house for me. I was sexton for about twenty years, then I went away for about eight years, but they couldn't do without me, and set the church a-fire, and was then forced to send for me again, and now I've been on about two years.

Nobody knew Palmer better than I did, and nobody had more talk to him than I did. Mrs. Palmer was a very nice little woman, for she was a very small lady. She was very good to me. I never bought a sock nor a pair of shoes for my little one after my missus died, nor yet for the girl that was in their house. She gave me all that, and many a thing besides that. Many a time she's give me food for the children. I used to work in the garden for Mr. Palmer. I used to do it all up for him. It's a very large garden; half an acre, I should think, sir, altogether.

I'm sure he is the last person in the town, as I should have suspected of such a thing as this. He was a religious man, and many's the time, when I've had a sup of ale too much, he's chastised me for it. He'd say, "Do keep yourself respectable, and don't go to them public-houses. If you wants a drink of ale, come here." Ah! he had a very tidy lot of ale! I brewed him a six-and-twenty strike (bushel) of malt. It's all sold now at the auction.

I remember when Bladen died and was buried. I helped to carry him (his coffin). He was a traveller for a brewer, and many's the bit of talk I've had with him about brewing, though he didn't show much learning in his talk. Was Mr. Bladen a nice man? I'm sure he was! There couldn't be a nicer man than Mr. Bladen.

You see, just before Mr. Bladen died so suddenly, Mrs. Thornton had also died suddenly. When Bladen died too, then Mrs. Palmer (William's wife) got talking and saying, what will people say now there's two of them sudden deaths. The poor missus was very sorry. She told me so herself; so I don't know it by no hearsay. Bladen was a very stout man.

I knew Cook very well. I seed him that Friday morning as he was taken ill. He went by me whilst I was working in the garden—he and the master, and another, but I forgot who. Whilst he was ill, the master come to me, and says, "Did you take particular notice whether Cook was looking bad, or if he walked as if he was ill?" But, as I said, I didn't take no particular notice; for if a hundred persons was to pass me, I shouldn't look at 'em. I don't like staring at folk like wild beasts.

When Cook died, then people began to talk. Palmer said to me, he says, "I shall tell Mr. Keyes, the coffin-maker, that you'll help to carry Mr. Cook; but I'll have nothing to do with it. It shall not be said as if I had anything to do with it." No, the master didn't follow Mr. Cook to the grave; he kept away. There was Mr. Cook's father-in-law, and some others as kept the funeral waiting for 'em.

I didn't see Palmer after the Friday. I went to the house, but I didn't go up stairs. At last I went. The inquest was sitting then. He said, "Why haven't you been before to see me?" I said I didn't know. I hadn't no suspicion then as to who was the man with him, which was a sheriff's officer as took him for debt. He said to me, "Just go and see what they're doing at the inquest, and get yourself a loaf of bread for the children, and I'll pay for it;" but he didn't pay for it.

I didn't take up Walter Palmer and the Missus. If they'd give me twenty sovereigns, I couldn't have done it. She was a real nice sort of a lady, always so particular, and kind to me, and I couldn't bear to disturb her rest.

I took up Cook on Friday (last week), the night before they come and told me I was to get ready as soon as I could in the morning, and I was to get somebody to help me, and so I did. I suppose it (the coffin) was out soon after seven o'clock. There was the police, and the clerk, Mr. Sherrard, and his nephew. They said to me I could work better in the dark than with a light; but I had a lamp lit ready. It was very dark, only the moon rises very bright, and that helped us; if I recollect right, the moon was overcast. It was very cold, and a sad job. Besides, the ground is very awkward where he's buried, because it tumbles in sometimes. They wanted two biers. I did not know what they wanted the two of 'em for; but, you see, the one was for the coffin, and the other for the body when it was took out of the shell. The coffin was a very good one, but we made a bit of a mess of the cloth taking the gravel off of it. Coffins will keep in our churchyard twenty years, I reckon; it's a capital place.

I did not see the body taken out, but I see it after. He wasn't changed much, only he was sawed all down the chest. But I couldn't look at him much. I thought a good deal then; but I don't know what I thought; it so upset me altogether. He was the last man as ever I should have expected anything to have come to. They always seemed so intimate—more like brothers in fact; Palmer has said so.

The old mother used to come to church most Sundays; but I have never seen her, nor the daughter neither since this affair happened. When I was in the belfry, tolling for service, I have often seen Mr. William Palmer go to his mother's house, which is opposite, and come back with his little boy and the Miss. His boy is a very nice sharp lad as ever breathed, poor little fellow!

RUGELEY CHURCHYARD.

We are glad when we are in the open air again; the wind seems to blow away the sadness with which the perusal of Palmer's pencil-note had filled us.

The old sexton, keys in hand, accompanies us into the burial-ground. He thinks he is called upon to do the honours of the place to the stranger. He begins to talk of the graves, telling us that, by-and-bye, he shall do all the green mounds up, and have them nicely turfed, but he can't do everything at once—

"Where is the Palmers' tomb?" we ask, cutting short his speech.

He knows the road, every inch of it, and leads us over the green mounds, and through the white stones, and round to the back of the church, where, sheltered by the elms that skirt the graveyard, is the vault of this wretched family.

This monument was erected when Joseph Palmer died. He had risen to wealth and respectability, and deserved, according to the notions of his heirs, to have a Grecian tomb placed over his "dust and ashes," with iron rails to keep off the curious intruder. A man that leaves £70,000 behind him deserves something better than a grass mound to mark his last resting-place. He sprang from nothing, but he mustn't end so. He must be made a good deal of.

On the stone slab above the tomb—that kind of death's visitor's-book, where all who enter have their names written down,—is inscribed, in deep

cut letters that will bear much wear and tear before they are worn away, "In a vault beneath are interred the remains of Joseph Palmer," together with his age, and the date of his death.

We ask Charles Hawley whether William Palmer's wife, and her four infant children, and his brother Walter,—the jovial Wat, as he was called,—were not also buried in this vault.

He tells us that they were, and that he has many a time wondered why their names have never been carved on the top slab.

Perhaps the long list of victims frightened the destroyer. They followed so rapidly that people would have talked if they had seen the catalogue.

"It's a nice spot for a vault," observes Charles Hawley, forcing us to look around at the view. He points out to us the rich smooth meadow beyond the iron hurdles, with the vicar's fat cow feeding, and the sixteen acre field rented by Mr. Williss, of the Talbot Inn, dotted with manure heaps; and shows where Lord So-and-so's estate begins, and where the stone-quarry is on the distant tree-cove hills; and, in fact tells us all about the landscape.

We leave the spot where William Palmer "howled and cried, and roared like a madman, and called aloud 'Dear Annie,'" as they lowered his wife's coffin into the deep pit; and the sexton guides us to the mound that marks the grave of another of his victims. The slate slab tells us that it was erected "In memory of Leonard Bladen, of Ashby-de-la-Zouche," the unfortunate brewers-bagman, who drank of his host's wine, and died.

Near the gate a grave has been newly dug. The gravel is thrown up into a mound on one side, and a ladder is placed in the deep hole. People are stretching their necks over the stone wall and looking wonderingly at the spot. That morning the body of Cook had been taken up to be examined by the medical men, for Palmer had hit upon a clever notion for the cause of his friend's death, and to refute it the coffin had to be opened.

The coffin had been carried to the ruins of the old church, and placed in the old tower, and before the door were two policemen keeping guard. The doctors had already done their work, when few persons were abroad, in the first light of the morning. The landlord of the Talbot Inn was the only person who saw them. He was an early riser, and was feeding his cows when the mournful procession crossed the road. He ran up to the ruined tower, and through a hole in the stonework saw the dreadful spectacle. The sexton, too, had been into the place, but it made him feel sick, for "he had known Cook, and liked him, and it turned his heart to see his poor body cut through."

We have finished our walk among the tombs.

THE LANDLORD OF THE TALBOT INN AT RUGELEY.

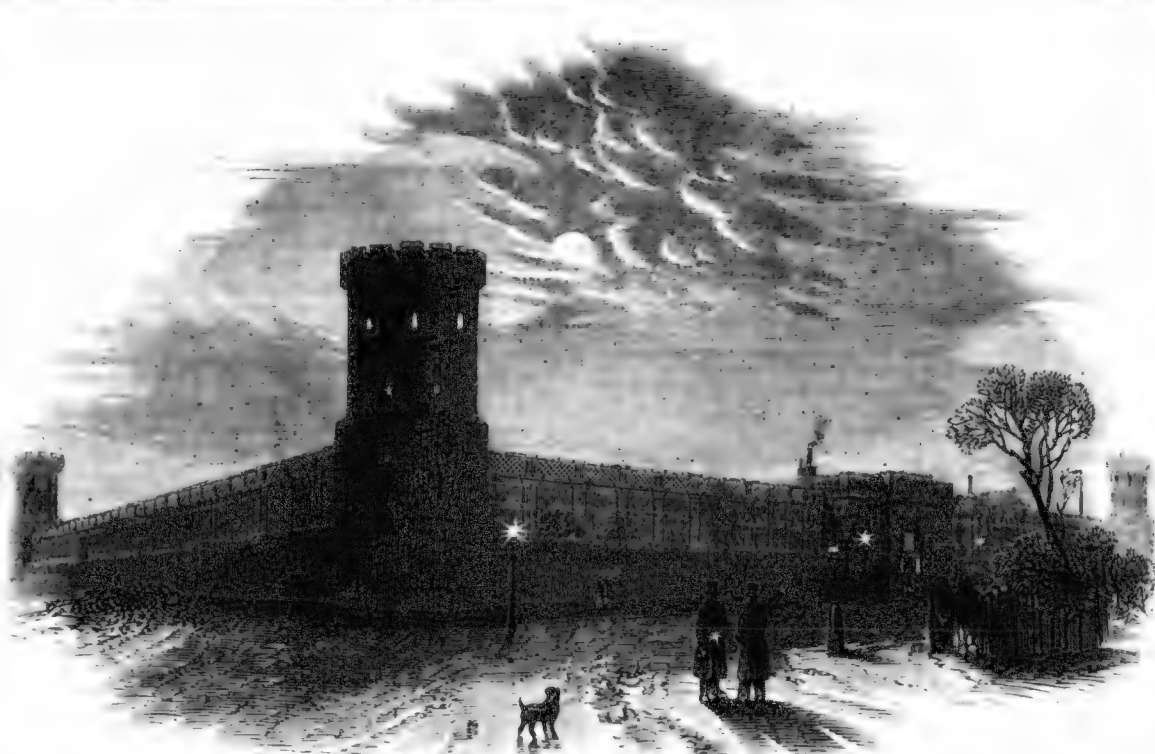
Mr. John Williss, the landlord of the Talbot Inn, where the bodies of Mrs. William Palmer and Walter Palmer were opened, is a stout, jolly-looking man, who is trying to appear unhappy and who talks of ruin, because commercial travellers have of late taken a dislike to his house. We found him sitting in his bar, with a fat child between his knees, and signing and drinking ale by turns, whilst his wife—a pretty little woman,

with a baby in her arms, was endeavouring to reason him out of his despondency.

There was a gun over the fireplace, and he kept his eye fixed on it like a crow. He occasionally thrust his hand into his brown velvet waistcoat, and glanced round at the rows of ale mugs and barrels of spirits, as though he was calculating what they would sell for, if the worst came to the worst. When a customer entered and called for ale, he rose to

draw it with an air of resignation, and it was difficult to tell whether he or the beer-engine was groaning. The fat child was munching an apple, and nearly choked itself; and as Mr. Williss extracted the fruit from its mouth, he muttered something about it's being perhaps better to die young before it had come to want.

Three commercial travellers with plenty of luggage, would restore Mr. Williss to happiness. There is one good thing; Mrs. Williss doesn't seem



STAFFORD JAIL.



DRS. TAYLOR AND REES, THE ANALYTICAL CHEMISTS.



WILLIAM WEBB WARD, CORONER FOR STAFFORDSHIRE.



THE TOWN HALL, RUGELEY.



THE STABLES OF THE GRAND JUNCTION

all anxious on her husband's account, but appears to know that their sorrows will soon pass away. Mr. Willis made the subjoined communication to us:—
Yes, sir, I'm the landlord of the Talbot Inn—not the Talbot Arms—that's old Masters as is the landlord of that, but I'm Willis.
Some time after the murder of Cook, and while Palmer was under arrest with sheriff's officers, it was deemed to exhume the bodies of Mr. Walter Palmer and Mrs. Palmer. I knew they were going to do so, because two police officers stayed here all night. About the morning, when we were in bed, on a bright morning (it was very bright, added Mrs. Willis), of the policemen, by name of Chesham, who lodged came to our room, and says he, "Here, you must they are going to bring these bodies into the

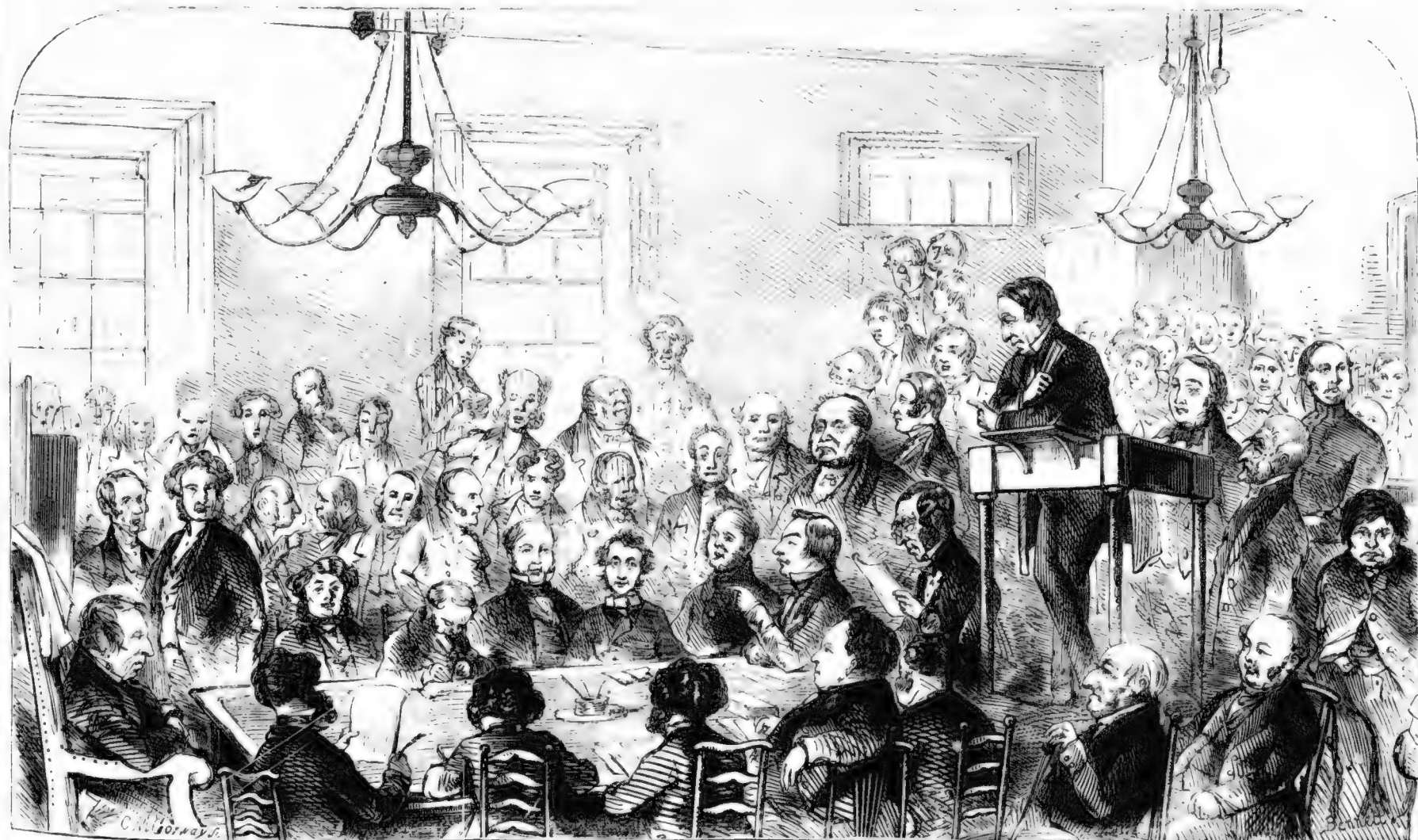
house; Mr. Burgen says they was to come here.' I to him there was an outhouse and coachhouse where he could take 'em. Then Burgen told me they was to come here, and that he had a letter from the Secretary of State, saying they were to go into the Talbot Inn. We have had the coachhouse all cleared out on purpose; but Burgen says it's too cold there, the doctors can't manage their work; they must come here because the Secretary of State says so. I told him we could warm up the coachhouse, but he wouldn't. They brought the corpses here. We were obliged to put 'em into the commercial-room, because that was the only place where the passage would let the coffins enter. Mrs. Palmer was not so bad, but Walter Palmer was shocking. It's a blessing he was taken away the same night. Only fancy, twenty-three jurymen, and I among the number, for I was a jurymen, the coroner, four police-officers, and



GEORGE BATE ESQ.,
"A GENTLEMAN OF GOOD PROPERTY, AND POS-
SESSING A CAPITAL CELLAR OF WINE."

WILLIAM PALMER OF RUGELEY.

THE "BOOTS"
AT THE GRAND JUNCTION HOTEL, STAFFORD.



BURGEN.
WARD, CORONER.

DR. WADDELL.

DR. REES. DR. DAY. DEANE, SOLICITOR. THIRLBY.
SMITH, SOLICITOR.

SUP. HATTON

DR. TAYLOR.

WALKENDEN.

DR. BAMFORD.

MASTERS. LLOYD, (JUNCTION.) "BOOTS" AT THE JUNCTION

INTERIOR OF THE TOWN HALL, RUGELEY, DURING THE INQUEST ON THE BODY OF WALTER PALMER.

lookers on in that little room, as is only about five yards by three. When the lid was lifted up the stench was awful. Captain Whiteacre took his stick and bobbed it through the window to let in the air (it's a beautiful ventilated room, too); some of the jury were sick. I don't know as ever I smelt anything like it, it was so uncommon bad.

In the common room it seemed to sink into everything. It was as if the walls, and in the paint, and in the looking-glass even. We were obliged to have the passage took down (and it near killed the men as well as the women) wood-work painted, and the ceiling whitewashed. I never saw such a thorough job as this. The things had been soaked in a liquor, and took up in four. Of course, the boards where the stuff dropped from the coffin was all done for, and had to be taken up and burned. Ah! it was a nasty business.

This affair has been as good as £200 or £300 out of my pocket. Ah! I can't say the loss, I don't know it yet. Commercial gentlemen that used to come here before, and have done, some of them, for 20 years, won't come to the bar now. One of them, only the other day, said to me the takes a brandy-and-water just for friendship sake. "I won't go into the house, and I won't look at the room; perhaps in a two-month I may." I used generally to have four or five, and often more commercial gentlemen in a week. Now they don't come. Worse than that, they have taken away the "rent meeting." We have under Lord Lechfield, and the tenants used to come in my house to pay their rents. Now, this year, they let me provide the dinner, but they would not come after all, but took what we had provided from here to the Tolbot Arms to be consumed. I was brought to this house in arms. My father and mother had it. We were told that the Tolbot Arms, used to be the best in the town. Formerly, they didn't stir it out of opposition, but this is the fact. I was under Lord Lechfield, and I under Lord Lechfield, so they thought they ought to change.

There is some talk about getting up a dinner at my house as a recompense for what I've put up with. I can't say if it'll come off or not; perhaps as I'm in had luck it won't; but I hope to Heaven it will, for I'm particular worried about this exhuming business, and wants to see somebody or other in the house.

After taking Mr. Willis's statement we proceeded to view the apartment where the medical examination was held. It is decidedly a very small room, and would not, we should have imagined, have held twenty persons. It has just been freshly done up, and the only ornament about it now is that of the varnish with which the wainscoting has been rendered so brilliant. There are five tables in the room—some with their round tops turned up like targets, and others with stuffed birds and lamps upon them. A snapper and a print of the "Gentle Shepherd," hang up against the bright blue paper on the wall.

We can assure the commercial gentlemen who visit Rugeley, that it would be difficult to find in England a more comfortable and pleasant room for passing the evening in.

STAFFORD.

STAFFORD might have remained quietly slumbering among its hills, if Mr. William Palmer had not dragged it into a kind of criminal notoriety by making it the scene of his murderous attempts upon the life of his brother, Walter Palmer. The old town, and its antique buildings, boasting all the claims of ancient nobility, have had a stain of dishonour cast upon them. The world talks of Stafford and Rugeley, associating prussic acid with the former, and strychnine with the latter, until there is attached to both spots an interest which authorises us in specially visiting the localities and giving their portraits in type. All who have not yet run down to the murderous towns, desire to know what kind of places they are. "Is Rugeley large or small, old or new?" those who have been there are continually asked. "And Stafford. What is it like?" is a common question. We will do our best to satisfy the reader.

The ancient town of Stafford appears, when first seen from the railway, to be built of red bricks, with slate roofs, and a tall, square, white church tower standing up in the midst of them. Around it are flat meadows, covered with water, for the farmers are just flooding their fields to manure them. This takes away from the liveliness of the landscape, for the big pate hies of sailing water give it a greasy look. The river has divided itself into about twenty rivers, making each ditch a stream, and it rushes tearing along with its yellow water as if it were mad, and in a hurry to throw itself into the Trent below.

We cannot do better than borrow from Mr. Thomas Myatt, better known as Tom, the "boots" at the Grand Junction, a description of the environs of the town of Stafford—such as he gave us while standing at the window of the Grand Junction Hotel.

I don't know who the windmill yonder, right at the end of the town. Messen rents it at present; but he never uses it for grinding—only keeps it full of corn, and when the sails go round, it's only when he is winding up or letting down the sails. That tower is St. Mary's Church, that was done up some ten years ago, I should say; as to be sure, it was quite as late as that. They say the inside is wonderful; for I haven't been there, for I never was fond of curiosities. That three square tower is St. Chad's Church. That's the oldest we have, and is every bit of it built of red stone. It's been there a many year. It was built, you see, when there weren't many inhabitants; for the churchyard is the smallest I ever see—or anybody else, for the matter of that. The water-mill just behind them while mills is Mr. George Brewster's. Ay, I remember when he used to live in the little house, but he has got on famous, to be sure. That red wall belongs to his orchard. The tall chimney belongs to the Gas Works. There's something on it, they tell me, to keep off the thunder. I don't know, I'm sure, what it's like, for I never was close up again it.

All them is Brewster's meadows, and they're, as you see, floating there. He never does nothing to them but float 'em. Water's the only manure they gets. Our river here is called the river Sow. She's a split up into a good many little sows now; a whole litter of 'em, isn't there? They go on the whole six of 'em for a mile and a half from here, and falls into some other river; but whether they goes to the right or the left, or where they empties themselves, I can't say. I never was much of a hand at land surveying and maps.

Stafford is an ancient borough and market town, celebrated for its red bricks and shoes. As the gentleman at the chemist's told us, when we asked him whether Stafford was celebrated for any other article besides shoes—it has about 13,000 inhabitants. It is a very ancient city, and used to be called Betheney; it was built, in the year 913, by Ethelreda, "the heroic widow of Ethelred, Earl of Mercia."

The town of Stafford contains some of the oldest and newest houses in the county. The new ones are all in red brick, and hurt the eyes very much—like staring at a fire; but once cross the long wooden bridge, with the white railings (built by the railway), turn round by the four mill, and follow the lane until you come into Greengate Street, and there you will find all the old houses standing of a row on both sides of the street, jumbled together, "the tall ones next the small ones," of all manner of different heights—some four, some two storeys—and with all manner of shaped roofs—some high and pointed, others broad and sloping, with heavy carved gables. To be sure, the jeweller's house has been "repaired" in stucco, and adorned with wreaths over the windows and doors. The Dolphin Inn has also been newly done up and beautified; and they both look like bold-faced upstarts next their ancient, respectable brethren, and seem cold and miserable in their coats of white paint, next the rich brown wood work and warm-coloured plaster of the half-timbered houses.

There is a house next to the market-place, with a big forehead, that hangs half way over the pavement, with large bay windows, like four-post beds let into the wall. The yellow oaken beams, that show through the plaster work, are arranged in all manner of lines, tattooing the body of the house with a half-savage grace. The firm of Jenkinson and Co., large linendrapers, occupy the premises now, and the shop window is decked out with every article "that fashion can require, or beauty desire," as the advertisement says. Festoons of pink and blue ribbon hang elegantly from side to side, and yellow driving-gloves are ranged in straight lines across the panes. At the entrance door is placed, like a stand of arms, a bundle of umbrellas; whilst, through those immense bay windows on the first and second floor, you can see piles of blue hat boxes, tall slabs of lincens, and square canvases blocks of unpacked goods, bound round with bands of iron, as if to keep their figures in. Those bay windows are like rooms; and how they are kept up in their place, is startling. We did not like to walk under them. Some of these days they will drop off like ripe pears.

The big Portland-stone building in the square, with the clock stuck up against it like a target, is the town hall. It is not a pretty building, for it has no more ornament upon it than a sheet of writing paper—indeed, the windows are more like notes than anything else. But then it has old houses, in their cocked-hat roofs, on each side of it, all half timbered, till their fronts seem slashed like a soldier's uniform; and they impart to the

square and the pale stucco dead wall of the town hall a kind of dignity as if you could judge a house by the company it keeps.

At the end of Green Gate Street, and indeed in Gaol Gate Square, a travelling show has taken up its stand. It's a very handsome, yellow, half ship looking residence, and the wheels are covered with clay, as if they had come a long distance. It gives quite a rustic appearance to the town, and really the style of architecture of the caravan, with its brown, highly-decorated shutters and polished door and brass knocker is not out of keeping with the more solid residences in Stafford.

The Methodist's New Connection Chapel in Gaol Street, with the store-pipe coming out of the ground-floor window, is excessively red, and looks sore, because the white stucco columns in front have the appearance of huge bones sticking through the pink flesh. The house of Mr. Ward, the corner, is in front.

DR. WADDELL.

Dr. Waddell is a medical gentleman, residing in Stafford, where he has an excellent practice. It was to this gentleman that William Palmer went to obtain a medical certificate, before he proposed his father's life to the different assurance offices. Dr. Waddell figures most honourably in this tragical history, from the fact that, when at last he yielded to the entreaties of William Palmer, and filled up the proposals, he placed a foot-note at the bottom of the printed form, warning the Assurance Company of the sudden death of Mrs. William Palmer, soon after her life had been assured, and entreating them to be careful.

DR. WADDELL'S STATEMENT.

I knew Walter Palmer well. He was a generous liver, as I thought from his appearance. He was a large, broad man, and had the appearance of robust health. I always considered that he was free with the bottle, but that he was not a drunkard. The first time I met him professionally, I found—contrary to his appearance, and my judgment—that he was a drunkard, for I was called in to see him when he was suffering from an attack of delirium tremens. I got him over it. He told me on his recovery that trouble had in a great measure caused his addiction to liquor. I then found out that he had separated from his wife on account of his intemperate habits. He was really attached to her, as well as to me, although it was impossible for them to live together.

The next time I heard of Walter Palmer, was when his brother, William Palmer, called upon me to certify for his life assurance. I should think he called upon me at least ten times, and for ten different offices. I filled them all up. Sometimes he suggested questions, which, when I thought proper, I adopted. But his interference was most marked and extraordinary. I became suspicious of the man, and in consequence of that suspicion I did my utmost to induce the offices not to accept the assurance. I knew that the wife of Mr. William Palmer had died shortly after her life had been insured. It was only nine months since her death, and fresh proposals were being made. I also knew that he was in difficulties. I knew that I could not, in my professional capacity, act honourably in the matter, without impacting these suspicions. I added to each proposal the following note—

"Most Confidential.—His life has been rejected in two offices—I am told he drinks. His brother insured his late wife's life for many thousands, and after the first payment, she died. Be cautious." (Signed) "C. WADDELL."

For the second proposal for a life policy, my reply to the question as to the "general appearance, figure, complexion," &c., may appear contradictory, considering that the death took place so soon after the proposal for the assurance; but I can only wipe away the suspicion by the following explanation. I was frequently out riding in the Castle Road, a mile and a half from Stafford. There I often met Walter Palmer, and used to fancy that he was taking his "constitutional" walks. I was very pleased to see this, and thought him a reformed drunkard. On many occasions, he stopped me, and asked me what I thought of his appearance. My only reply used to be a counter-question as to whether he had given up drinking. He invariably assured me that he only drank used to be three glasses of bitter ale a day, and he could swear it. "Well, then," he would say, "what do you sit and in the way of my assuring my life for? You see I'm an altered man. I drink nothing but three glasses of bitter ale a day; and I can eat like a horse, and am as hearty as a buck."

I really liked the appearance of the man. He seemed healthy and strong, and apparently spoke truthfully; for at the time I was not aware that he had changed his residence from the town of Stafford to the country; and, indeed, I imagined that each morning he had walked to the spot where I met him.

I consented, at last, to fill up the forms, and felt perfectly justified that I was acting rightly in so doing. I sent them up this time without any observation, having personally and bodily examined him within three weeks of sending the proposals. I am very glad to see that Mr. Alfred Smee (surgeon to the Bank of England, and discoverer of the celebrated form of the galvanic battery which bears his name) fully corroborated all my statements.

The life, I believe, was accepted for £13,000. It is my opinion that it could have been accepted in other offices if it had not been for my previous warning.

The last time I heard of Walter Palmer was this: I met Walkenden, and I spoke to him, asking him what he had been doing since I last saw him. He answered, "I have just been burying Walter Palmer." I asked him what he meant, for I could scarcely believe it. I was terribly shocked. I cried out, "I will let the Assurance Office know of this," for I had a presentiment that there had been foul play.

This is all I know of Walter Palmer, and his connection with his brother William Palmer.

Before concluding, I must add that, despite all that has been said against Walkenden, I can only say this—At the time of Walter's first attack of delirium tremens, Mrs. Waddell, at my request, sent him some cold tongue and Turkey (the best medicine he could take), so as if we could tempt him to eat anything. The next day Walkenden, of his own accord, called to tell us how much "poor Walter" had enjoyed his dinner. In fact, for any kindness shown to poor Walter, he appeared to be himself personally grateful. I consider that Walkenden was a very powerful instrument in Walter Palmer's recovery from his first attack of delirium tremens, when I was first called in to attend him. As I said in my evidence before the jury, I was materially assisted in my endeavours to restore Walter Palmer to health, by the exertions of Mr. Walkenden.

WALKENDEN THE BOTTLE-HOLDER.

The man of the name of Walkenden, who has obtained so much notoriety, not only from the suspicion that he was engaged by William Palmer at a weekly stipend to ply the unhappy Walter Palmer with drink, but also for his general conduct when examined before the Coroner, resides in Earl Street, Stafford, in a house which adjoins St. Mary's burial-ground. We had determined on visiting this fellow, simply because we could not imagine or believe that a man could, without vengeance or cause for hatred, coolly hasten on the death of a person who considered and treated him as a friend. We paid this visit, mostly for our own consolation, so as to try and rid ourselves of the idea that such iniquity could exist.

The door was answered by a frank, open-faced boy, who told us that his father would be in directly, and we were to wait. The apartment was simply enough furnished, but was excessively clean and tidily arranged. On the table were a Bible and Prayer-book.

Walkenden is a broad-faced, powerful-looking man. His countenance is singularly flat, but coarse and hard-featured. At first he stubbornly refused to hold any conversation with us. "The paper men have written me down as a rogue—let it be so," said he. "I've been blackguarded up hill and down dale, and it's best to let matters be. People may think as they like. I've nothing to say."

This appeared to us to be a singular evidence of Walkenden's character. As we afterwards found out, he is obstinate to a remarkable degree. On the smallest attempt to force him to speak out at the inquest he in return abused Coroner, jury, and lawyers. The instant any coercion is attempted, the man resists.

After talking to him for about twenty minutes, he consented to our taking down the following statement:—

I knew Mr. Walter Palmer well. I had as great respect for him as I had for my own brother. Up to the 8th of April last, he lodged and boarded in my house, eating at my table with me and my family. When he was drinking heavy, he never had any appetite for eating. We have many times tried to prevent him from drinking, by taking away the bottle and hiding it. He used to say, "If I can't have it here, I'll go out and get it." Of course, when he insisted upon it, we were forced to give way, and let him have it; we had no other chance—I had no power over him. If I had been selling it to him, it might have been different, and even then he could have gone out and got it. It was his own, and he insisted upon doing what he liked with it.

Walter Palmer was going into the corn trade a second time. He said to me one day—"I should like to engage you to assist me. What must I give you?" "Well, I don't know," I said; "we must consider about that." But finally he agreed to give me 30s. a week for a twelvemonth, certain, provided I served no other person in the trade during that time without his knowledge. He took rent, and here it is.

Mr. Walter Palmer drew up an agreement between us, and asked me to sign it, which I did. I likewise asked him for a copy, which he signed, and I kept the one and he the other. At Walter Palmer's death, I gave Mr. William Palmer his brother's pocket-book, and the agreement was in it. I also showed him the copy I held. "It's no use, Mr. William Palmer," I said, "my holding

this agreement, now your brother is dead; I have no doubt I shall have done me by the family." There was money due to me upon the agreement. Mr. William Palmer took the agreement away with other papers, and I never saw them again. They were among his private documents when they were seized by the police. I asked Burgen, the inspector, to let me have the agreement back, and he laughed at me. The reason why I wanted the agreement back was, that I was to the position Mr. William Palmer was in, I wanted to show my claim to balance due to me.

As Mr. Walter Palmer felt he was falling ill, he repeatedly begged of me to take his gin from him, as I formerly did at my own house; for he said he had only had my gin then when I wanted it, as I had before, I should not been half so bad as I was.

When he had the delirium, I would not give him any gin, because Dr. Waddell said he was only to have two or three small glasses a day. But I used to take him to the delirium, and perhaps I would give him a glass or two more than Waddell ordered, when I saw there was any necessity. But what was I, the poor fellow used to beg and cry for it as it was his!

He used to do all he could, and be coming to get gin. One morning he had been sitting up with him all night, I thought he was so ill that he could not possibly leave his bed, and we went down stairs to the kitchen under his bedroom. Whilst I was eating a little breakfast, I heard a creaking. "Why," I said, "that sounds as if he is out of bed; but it is impossible." I ran up stairs, and I found him crawling on his hands and knees, and searching for something under the dressing-table, in the same way as I formerly used to hide his gin, to prevent us taking it away from him. "What's he doing?" I said, "what are you doing there?" "I cannot find it," he said. "No," I replied, "and never will," and I lifted him up in my arms, and put him again in bed. He used to hide his gin bottle in all sorts of places—his bed-head or under his mattress, or in his boots, or anywhere.

TOM MYATT, THE "BOOTS" AT THE GRAND JUNCTION HOTEL, STAFFORD.

Tom is a short stout man, whose age it is difficult to tell, because of expression of countenance is that of a lad, whilst the face itself is of an elderly man. He is a man of independent behaviour, always a civil, but always departing from the recognised habits of "boots" general, such as abstaining from calling one "Sir." If you ask him for slippers, he brings them in and says, "Here they are." When we leave, Tom says, "So you are going, are you?" and when you inform him that important and sudden business forces you to quit the Grand Junction Hotel, he adds, "Have you got all your things?" The lad, however, makes a harmless, good-natured "boots," whose singularities have the advantage of causing the visitors to laugh. Very few customers leave the hotel without remembering "the boots."

Tom prefers dressing in a black surcoat, a black velvet waistcoat, and black pants. His appearance has a half professional look, as if he was trying to raise the occupation of "boots" to a more dignified position. He wears his cap on one side, and, despite an evident neglect of the hairbrush, he carries his head well.

When we had the honour of an interview with Tom, he sat in an armchair before us, playing with the end of his yellow bandanna necktie. His eyes are straight and narrow, something like slits, and he seldom looks them when he speaks, which gives him the appearance of a thoughtful, modest man. His lips are thick and red; and when he is spoken to, he rubs his hair first, as if he were shining up his thoughts, and then, whilst he continues to speak, picks his nails, or hugs his boots—which latter articles, for a "boots's" boots, are singularly devoid of blacking.

THE BOOTS'S STATEMENT.

I've known Palmer ever since I remember. I come from about three miles from him. I'm from Cooch, and he Rugeley. I always took him for a very decent sort of fellow.

Yes, there's no mistake about him. The least thing in the world as I ever did for him he'd tip me a shilling. He never gave less. If I was to just go, for instance, only as far as the station, he never gave less. Suppose he was to say, "Here, Tom, order me a car, whilst I walk on to the house," why, there was a shilling for only doing that.

He didn't often stop long at our house when he came. Perhaps he'd come here of a night, and take a car to go home to Rugeley, and then he'd say to the postboy, "Here, gander, get a glass of gin," or whatever it was. Sometimes he was merry and sometimes he wasn't, just as he was took. Perhaps he'd come in and ask for a glass of liquor, whatever it might be. But I never see him a joking the maids, or anything of that sort.

I don't know as ever I see Mr. Walter inside the house, although he might have been here for all that. Walter was quite a gentlemanly-looking man, like William, but not so lusty. He used to drink a good deal, but don't know as he ever drunk much out.

The family of the Palmers is well liked down in this country, especially the people about Rugeley. They spend a deal of money! I don't know as I ever see Mrs. Palmer, the old lady, above once. I went once with Palmer and his mother, one summer's day, as far as the Hawthorns, (a country place), and I was carrying down biscuits and brandy and stuff, and they had it on the green.

You want to know about the bottles? I don't know what I was doing at the time, but I think I was in my boot-room when Mr. William Palmer came to me, and give me two bottles wrapped up in paper to take care of. He come and fetched 'em back the same day, but he gave them me over again. It was next day as he come and says, "Tom, give me them bottles." He went into the stable, and I followed him in, and then he took out a little bottle and poured into the big. I only see him do this once, for I turned away, it being no business to do with my work. I didn't see what was in the little bottle. Mr. Walter was living at his own house, just over the bridge, close to.

As soon as the master (Mr. Lloyd), come up, Palmer done talking, he went off towards Walter's house.

It put the surprise on me to hear of Walter's being dead. I drunk a pint of ale with him the Sunday before; at least, I drunk it myself in his kitchen; and then, for what I could see of him, he was as well as ever I see him, and in good spirits.

When first I heard of these poison cases I could not believe it. I should never have judged a man like William Palmer to have done no such a thing.

When I was examined, all that about sleep making my head ache was only Mr. Smith's gummion. He asked me if it did, and I thought he'd prefer my saying "yes," so I did, just so. It's got all over the country, and is regularly slapped at me everywhere. They says, "Tom, when you goes to sleep, does it make your head bad?" Some I answers, and some I don't, and them as I don't gets best off.

I think it was in October, but I can't say; but I believe it was in October, some time thereabout, that Palmer met me on the road, 'twixt here and the Station, and he says, "Tom, what'll you have?" I says, "A drop of brandy, if anything."

Then we come back here and had it. He mixed the brandy-and-water. "Have it here?" he says. To which I said, "Well, I'd rather have it outside." "No! have it here," he says; and I had it. It didn't taste queer, but was just like common brandy-and-water, as is made hot, with sugar. I shouldn't have drunk it if I hadn't tasted all right.

After I'd drunk it, I went into the yard, and then I was took bad. I felt drunk like. I didn't know where I was like. I certainly had some recollection, but very little; my senses was gone, like. Directly I'd drunk it, I knew there was something queer in it. I clapped my hand over my mouth, and ran out that way into the yard, when I threw up. I never was took that way before after drinking brandy. I don't drink so much of it. I generally drinks brandy neat. At one time I used to drink a good deal of brandy, all day, like. I used to begin in the morning and carry it on till night, and I kept this game up for pretty near eight year. I was never sick in my life afore, after drinking.

I went and lay me down in the kitchen, I think, and the missus says, "God God! why, what's the matter, Tom?" and I says, "Well, I think I'm poisoned." "Why, what have you been having?" "Some brandy-and-water along with Palmer," says I, and then something was said, I think, about having a doctor; but I hadn't no doctor. I went and lay me down in one of the stalls of the stable. I felt queer for three or four days afterwards. I remember very little about when I awoke, nor how long I lay there. The ostler come and look at me, and covered me up with rugs. I was "as black as soot in the face," he said, and he couldn't hear me breathe no how nor nothing, so he thought I was dead.

I never named it to Palmer. I couldn't positive swear that he gave me anything, you see. Smith says to me, "Was you ever sick from brandy before, Tom?" "No, sir," says I, "never; but I have drunk it many a time when I was sick, to make me well."

MR. LLOYD.

Mr. Lloyd, the landlord of the Grand Junction, kindly obliged us with the following details respecting William Palmer, and of his interview with him when he discovered him in the stable mixing the contents of the two bottles. Mr. Lloyd is a remarkably handsome and strongly-built man, and looks precisely what he is, namely, an attentive and amiable landlord.

MR. LLOYD'S STATEMENT.

I never knew anything of the Palmer family before this affair of the poisonings. I have, I may say, known Palmer for the last six or seven years, but only from his coming here. I always took him for a very different sort of person to what he has turned out. He was most pleasant and affable. I never knew him to lose his temper. I never heard an oath or a bad word leave his lips.

Dr. Taylor gave it as his opinion that many cases of sudden death requiring investigation occurred in which no investigation took place. He had been asked, while giving his evidence before the Coroner at Rugeley, whether he would always consider the case of a person being taken ill and dying within half an hour a suspicious one. His reply had been, that at all events he should consider it a case for inquiry. Dr. Taylor here called



H. A. DEANE, ESQ., SOLICITOR FOR THE PROSECUTION.

our attention to the ease with which certain poisons could be administered, and in such infinitesimal doses that the presence of the poison in the vehicle which might be selected for its administration could never be suspected until it had done its work beyond the possibility of remedy. Dr. Taylor at the same time expressed an opinion that it would be prudent to omit the particulars of this portion of his conversation—an opinion in which we fully coincided, and in accordance with which we now act.

We had heard, in common with the rest of the public, that Palmer's favourite study was a book on poisons, the pages of which bore evidence of having been frequently perused. We imagined this work to be the work on poisons of Dr. Taylor himself, but it appears to be a popular work on poisons—a kind of hand-book for medical students.

We asked Dr. Taylor whether he had any objection to show us the antimony which had been extracted from the body of the deceased Anne Palmer, and which had already been exhibited to the jury at Rugeley. We felt some unpleasant doubts as to the form in which the antimony might be presented to us, our thoughts turning involuntarily to "jars 1, 2, and 3," of unhappy celebrity. We were much relieved when Dr. Taylor returned with nothing but a little bottle, closed with a glass stopper, and containing apparently only a roll of white paper. This sheet of paper, when unrolled and displayed on the table, exhibited several rows of oblong copper plates, of about the length and breadth of large dominoes, and the thickness of a table-knife, presenting altogether the appearance of diminutive card-plates. The plates were arranged in rows of equal length upon the paper—in which they were fastened as sovereigns are inserted in cards for transmission through the post. Some of the pieces of metal were small squares of copper gauze that now looked as gray as if they were webs of Berlin iron work—and indeed the slips of thin sheet copper had lost all the colour of the original metal, being plated, as it were, with the dark metallic poison precipitated upon them. Dr. Taylor next informed us as to the curious process by which the metallic poison had been extracted from the corpse of the poor victim fifteen months after she had died from its effects. We do not enter into this, as it will no doubt be a subject of evidence at the trial. In former times, the present subtle method of detecting the presence of antimony was unknown, and many culprits necessarily escaped, owing to the deficiency of scientific knowledge on the part of the analysts. Doctor Taylor added that it formed no part of his business to say how the poison that was there on the strips of sheet copper before us had been introduced into the body of Anne Palmer. All he was called upon to declare was, that he had extracted a large quantity of antimony from the body, and that it was impossible that the substance could have been found in the system unless previously introduced into it during life.

Many important points are likely to be brought forward at the trial, nearly all of which are called attention to either in Inspector Field's interesting communication, or in the articles written from Rugeley by our special correspondents. Some of our readers may already have noticed the peculiar fact, that Palmer's wife died from the effects of antimony only a few days before the bill, of which her husband swears that she forged the acceptance, became due. We are informed that the holder of the bill was honoured with a most pressing invitation to spend a few days with Palmer, in the house which overlooks the burial-ground. The invitation was prudently declined, for it was beginning to be observed that visitors seldom lived there for more than a few days.

In conclusion, we avail ourselves of Dr. Taylor's interesting remarks on the nature and effect of Strychnia, Antimony, and Prussic Acid, the three poisons which will always be associated with the name of Rugeley.

DR. TAYLOR ON STRYCHNIA.

DR. ALFRED TAYLOR, in his work on "Poisons," has the following, under the head of "Narcotico-Irritant Poisons," to which class Strychnia, or Strychnine, as it is sometimes called, belongs.

"Nux Vomica," he tells us, "is the seed of the strychnos nux vomica. It is well known as a flat round kernel, less than an inch in diameter, with radiating fibres, slightly raised in the centre. It is of a light brown colour, and covered with a fine silky down. It is very hard, brittle, tough, and difficult to pulverize. The powder is of a gray brown colour, like that of liquorice: it is sometimes met with in a coarsely rasped state. It has an intensely bitter taste." . . . Instances of poisoning by the powdered seed are by no means unfrequent. In 1837-8, there were three fatal cases marked in the Coroner's return, and one case of poisoning by strychnia. The poisonous properties of nux vomica are due to the presence of strychnia; the symptoms in the two cases are alike, but, of course, much more severe when produced by the pure alkaloid (strychnia). Nux vomica is usually taken in the form of powder."



DR. WADDELL.



THE POST OFFICE, RUGELEY.



CHESHIRE, LATE POSTMASTER AT RUGELEY.



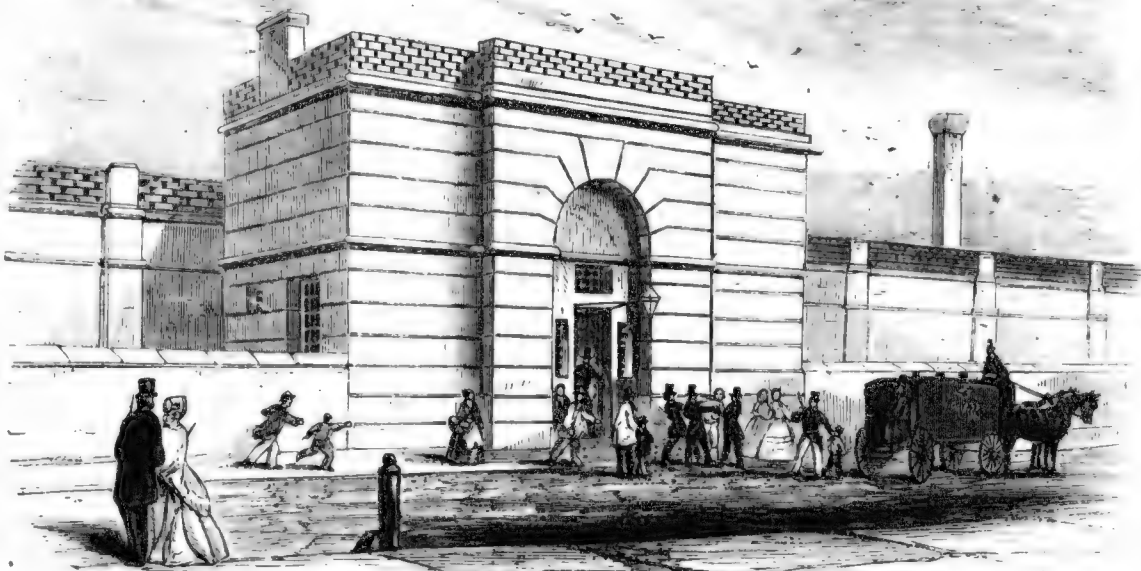
JOHN SMITH, ESQ., PALMER'S SOLICITOR.

When speaking of the symptoms produced by this poison, the Doctor says, "The powder has an intensely bitter taste, which is very persistent. In from twenty minutes after it has been swallowed, the patient is suddenly seized with tetanic symptoms, affecting the whole of the muscular system, the body becoming rigid, the limbs stretched out, and the jaws so fixed that considerable difficulty is experienced in introducing anything into the mouth. The muscles of the chest are also fixed by spasmodic contraction, and the body sometimes assumes the state of opisthotonos (i.e., of being bent backwards). The intellect is clear. This spasmodic state ceases, but after a short interval re-appears, and the chest is so fixed as to give the feeling of impending suffocation. After several such attacks, increasing in severity, the patient dies asphyxiated. Previous to and a feeling of general illness have sometimes preceded the attack, vomiting, pain in the abdomen, and other symptoms of irritation, have been occasionally witnessed where the case was protracted; but, in general, death takes place long before such symptoms are manifested."

STRYCHNIA, OR THE ACTIVE ALKALOID PRINCIPLE OF NUX VOMICA.

"The quantity of strychnia contained in the powder has not been very accurately determined. It probably amounts to about 0.5, or one half grain per cent. If this be the case, the strychnia is more energetic when contained in the unit than when separated. If nux vomica has been taken in the form of powder, we can only identify it in the stomach by demonstrating the presence of its strychnia."

"The symptoms and appearances produced by strychnia," adds Dr. Taylor, "closely resemble those described in speaking of nux vomica. The following case is reported in the 'Lancet,' January 7, 1855. A young man, aged 17, swallowed some strychnia. The symptoms came on in about a quarter of an hour. Trismus (lock-jaw) and spasmodic contractions of all the muscles speedily set in, the whole body becoming as stiff as a board. The lower extremities were extended and stiff, and the soles of the feet were concave. The skin became livid, the eyeballs prominent, and the pupils dilated and insensible. The patient lay for a few minutes without consciousness, and in a state of universal tetanus. A remission occurred, but the symptoms became aggravated, and the patient died asphyxiated, from the spasm of the chest, in about an hour and a half after taking the poison. On inspection, twenty hours after death, the body was very rigid. There was effusion in the spinal sheath, and the upper part of



ENTRANCE TO STAFFORD JAIL.



MASTERS, LANDLORD OF THE TALBOT ARMS.



THOMAS WALKENDEN, WALTER PALMER'S BOTTLE HOLDER.

TARTARISED ANTIMONY.

PRUSSIC ACID.

INSPECTOR FIELD AT RUGELEY.

In answer to Inspector Field's questions, as to the amount to which his life was to be insured, Bate did not state, that "he should leave it entirely to Mr. Palmer," as has been stated by all our contemporaries, but that this life was to be insured for £8,000. Of this sum, he stated that he himself was to have £2,000; and asked Inspector Field whether he considered that a fair share. "G. Bate, Esq.," we need scarcely add, was entirely ignorant of the nature of life assurance, and hardly understood the meaning of the word. The real sum for which William



The distinguished detective is at present engaged in an inquiry into other cases of criminality with which Palmer is supposed to have been connected, and which will have a peculiar interest for sporting men. We are not (for the present) at liberty to divulge particulars; but in all probability shall be in a position next week to make them acquainted with the principal facts of the case.—(See page 70 for *Memoir of Mr. Field*).

FACSIMILE OF AN ORIGINAL LETTER BY WILLIAM FOLGER

AN INQUIRY INTO THE NUMBER OF SUSPICIOUS DEATHS OCCURRING IN CONNECTION WITH LIFE INSURANCE OFFICES.

By HENRY MAYHEW, Author of "London Labour and the London Poor."

THE life assurance office is to the rich what the burial club is to the poor. As rich and poor are actuated by the same passions, and as numerous instances of poisoning for the sake of the burial-fees have occurred among the latter class, and been made public, it appeared to us by no means improbable (especially after the terrible revelations in the case of William Palmer) that some cases might occur of poisoning among the rich for the sake of insurance money, although the cases might be kept strictly private. With regard to the insurance of houses in Fire Companies, it is well known that while the number of insured houses destroyed by fire has been gradually on the increase, since the practice of insuring became general: that of uninsured houses has, owing to better safeguards, gradually diminished. Of course, many men who would not shrink from arson, might hesitate at murder; but, at all events, the question appeared worthy of a solution, and we accordingly determined to make such inquiries as should enable us to arrive at one. We attached no importance whatever to the fact, that but few cases of the kind in question had yet come before the public, for the late disclosures had shown that Insurance Companies were mere commercial bodies, in whose eyes murder appeared a good pretext for not paying the sum of money on the life of the murdered man.

We remembered that the murder of Walter Palmer had been ascertained by an insurance company, as completely as such a crime ever can be said to be ascertained, when a verdict has not been delivered to that effect, and that nevertheless no accusation was preferred against the person whom all the evidence pointed out as the probable murderer. We knew, moreover, that unless the prisoner, emboldened by the impunity with which his crimes were attended, had soon afterwards repeated them, he might even now have been at liberty, had he only consented not to press his claim against the Insurance Office.

But the public must not misunderstand us. Insurance offices are strictly commercial undertakings, and society, if it neglects to appoint a public prosecutor, must not expect that bodies of private individuals, who associate together with the mere view of obtaining interest on their money, will come forward to perform, at their own cost and responsibility, a duty which the entire community take no steps to have carried out. Moreover, it should be remembered, that however strong the proofs of guilt may appear when the evidence is brought together, the case can hardly, in the absence of judicial inquiry and post-mortem examinations, assume any other character than one of mere suspicion. And if after inquiry, such suspicions should happen to prove unfounded, the amount of odium which would be brought to bear against the office that had advanced an unfounded charge of murder against a person, with the mere view, as the public would be sure to declare, of withholding payment upon a policy, is surely sufficient to justify every insurance company in hesitating to make such an accusation. The fault we repeat lies in the want of a public prosecutor. It was, therefore, without the least prejudice against the insurance offices, that we commenced an inquiry. We did so because we found that a notion was growing up in the public mind, that tampering with the lives of assured persons was carried on to a greater extent than was made public. We considered it to be our duty as journalists, either to show that there were reasonable grounds for the belief, and thus to induce some Government measures for the suppression of the crime, or else to prove that the notion was a mere idle alarm, begotten in the exaggeration of the emotions produced by the Rugeley and Manchester poisonings, and so to allay the public fears in the matter. We can honestly say that we were prepared for either course. The truth alone concerned us as public writers, and this we now proceed to lay before our readers.

For the due prosecution of our inquiries, we provided ourselves with letters of introduction to gentlemen engaged as secretaries or actuaries to all kinds of offices in London. We were aware, in common with every one who reads the advertisements in the newspapers, that the young offices accepted lives which those of longer standing declined as a matter of course: some of the new offices granting the assured the privilege of travelling in uncivilised countries, getting perforated in a duel, committing self-destruction, or, if he prefer it, "dying by the hands of the law;"—we quote literally from a recent prospectus. Accordingly, we visited a certain number of the young, and a certain number of the old companies. Some of these were in a highly prosperous condition, others were on the point of decay; in a few, decay had already commenced.

It would be superfluous to narrate the particulars of our visit at every office. We, of course, found some persons more communicative than others; but, on the whole, we may state that the information obtained was of a similar nature wherever we addressed ourselves. It will therefore be sufficient to give the results of our interviews with gentlemen belonging to offices of different, and even opposite descriptions, from which the public will be able to ascertain for themselves whether the practice of tampering with the lives of the insured does or does not exist, and to what extent. It was stated in all our letters of introduction that we intended to publish the results of our visits to the different offices, and we, in every instance, repeated our intention of doing so. In some suspicious cases, we consider it advisable—at all events for the present—to suppress certain details; and, in accordance with an understanding which was entered into in most instances, we print initials instead of names.

OFFICE NO. I.

This was one of the new companies. Our appearance at the office seemed to excite a hope that we were about to insure our life—a notion which was at once dispelled by the contents of our letter. We were, in the first instance, shown into the board-room. The splendour of the furniture at once revealed to us that we were in one of the "young offices," the appearance of which bears the same relation to that of the old offices which a fashionable Parisian bank does to one of our banks in the City. A French banker who makes no display, obtains no customers. An English banker who exhibits signs of extravagance, causes his customers to withdraw their deposits. The massive mahogany table, with its smooth, green cloth, looked like a billiard-table without cushions, and stood magnificently in the middle of the room, like the billiard-tables of the French cafés. The luxurious chairs invited you of themselves to be seated. The ornaments on the mantel-piece were of a less pretending character, and consisted of a bottle of water, carefully covered over with an inverted glass; a large show-card of the office, illustrated with a symbolical representation of the benefits conferred by it upon its clients; a paper-knife, and a stethoscope.

The Secretary, after inquiring in what manner he could aid us in the object of our visit, at first replied to our request to be informed as to how many cases of suspicious death, connected with life insurance, had come under his notice, that he knew of none, and that he believed no such cases occurred.

He had heard of a gentleman, the director of a fire office, who believed that all fires were the work of incendiaries. "Another case of arson!" he would exclaim, as he entered the office the morning after a fire had occurred; "another villain has burnt his house down for the sake of the insurance money." Society must not, however, continue the Secretary, imagine that the life offices are so suspicious as to consider all deaths among the assured are caused by poison. It was also the interest of the offices, he said, to make the public believe that they never litigated cases. Some harm was certainly done by the great competition consequent upon the establishment, during the last few years, of numerous new offices. Then, offices were frequently started by adventurers for the sake of the situations at high salaries, and who got some member of their family to "lay the test egg," and then sent out agents to bring work at any price. Thirty-five, and often as much as fifty, per cent., was paid as commission on the first year's premium by these "young offices." The old offices gave nothing at all, and depended upon their own merits for custom. The "young offices," in their desire to get business, frequently "took lives" without making proper inquiries, and above all, without ascertaining what interest the person insuring had in the life of the person insured. The Secretary said, that although he could call to mind no recent well authenticated case of poisoning for the sake of insurance money, it was quite certain that the lives of persons insured were frequently tampered with. They were encouraged to dissipation; drink, and the means of procuring drink, were placed at their constant command;

and there had been cases of men whose lives were insured, having been urged to ride steeple-chases by persons to whom the policies had been assigned. He supposed we had heard of what were called "wager-cases." Wager-cases were those in which a "dropping life" was insured by another person, who paid the premiums, and thus virtually backed the man to die within a certain time. In these cases, the man who effected the insurance had a direct interest in the death rather than the life of the person insured. He advanced money to the "dropping-life," and if, as was too often the case, the "dropping life" had earned the title by intemperate habits, the greater solicitude was shown in providing him with intoxicating liquors, until at length the "life" fell in. It was a common thing in Ireland to say, "I will go five hundred on such a man; he appears to be breaking up." False reports as to the state of the man's health and habits were sent in to the various offices, and there was generally one of the young offices ready to accept the life without too much trouble, for the sake of doing business. These cases occurred principally in Ireland. In Great Britain, a person effecting an insurance on another's life, must prove that he has a greater interest in his life than in his death; but this law did not apply to Ireland, it having been passed before the union of the two countries. Had we heard, he asked, of the case of J.P. It was a very suspicious one. J. had died apparently of drink, at the age of 36, his life having been insured for upwards of £100,000. He had died in a horrible and disgusting condition; and the stench produced by his exertions had been such as to cause persons living in the same hotel to give notice to quit.

OFFICE NO. II.

The Secretary knew the case of J. The cause of death stated to the insurance offices was tubercular disease—a disease which seldom attacked confirmed drunkards like the deceased. In the neighbourhood of the place where the man died it was said, on the one hand, that he had fallen down dead in a field from apoplexy; on the other, that he had died in his bed from delirium tremens. The recent death of a gentleman in Scotland, whose life had been insured for a very large sum, was also very suspicious. This gentleman's life had been insured for a very large sum. Soon after the payment of the first premium he was found dead on a moor, with the back of his head blown off. The mode in which he met with his death had not been explained. In answer to a direct question, as to whether lives were often insured with evil designs, the secretary replied that many instances occurred of tampering with the lives of persons insured; and gave it as his distinct opinion, that more gambling in lives had taken place during the last two years than had ever been known before!

OFFICE NO. III.

This office was situated in the City. It was not a new office. It appeared to be under the direction of prudent, and even sagacious persons, for the reception-room is on the first-floor, and is reached by a spiral staircase, the ascent of which is sufficient to try the lungs of any one at all inclined to pulmonary complaints. With a spiral staircase, the slightest unbecoming sound about the heart or lungs can be detected. The Secretary spoke with that caution which is so becoming in a man connected with the legal profession. We asked him in a direct manner whether there were many cases of poisoning connected with his office, and were assured in reply that he knew nothing about poisoning in connection either with his or with any other company.

As soon, however, as we had had time to explain to him thoroughly the object of our inquiry, he became more communicative. There were doubtless, he said, many instances of money being obtained from insurance companies by improper means. Very often from motives of delicacy, from fear of making accusations which might after all turn out to have no foundation, insurance money was paid to the claimants even in cases of very great suspicion. There were also instances of claims being made against companies, and of their being denied by them, and afterwards abandoned by the applicants. He remembered a very suspicious case having occurred in 1849, the year of the cholera.

In the early part of that year an application was made to insure the life of a lady for a £1,000, on which occasion a solicitor was referred to, who however did not live at the address stated. A short time after the payment of the first premium, the lady died—as it was represented—of cholera. The lady was residing at Hampstead at the time of the attack, and yet the person attending on her thought fit to send all the way to the city in search of a medical man. The surgeon who was sent to lived in the same house as the solicitor who had acted as referee. This appeared to the Company a most suspicious case, in spite of the medical certificate to the effect that she had died of the epidemic which was raging at the time.

The Irish cases, he added, were the worst of all. An Irish life had been proposed to this Office some time ago, and had been pronounced perfectly good. After the life had been accepted, a hint was given by another Company that there was something wrong about it. The "life" having heard of this, neglected to pay the first premium, so that his policy became void. Soon afterwards this man became insured in another office, and it was not long before the life "fell in." It appeared, on investigation, that the person whose life had really been insured had never left Ireland, that he had fallen some months previously from a scaffold, had broken his ribs, and knew that he could never recover, and that he had been personated in London by the man who presented himself at the Insurance Offices, and who was considered such a remarkably good "life." The man who met with the accident had received some small sums of money from the persons who had effected the insurance, and it is not probable that he received from them any attention calculated to prolong his existence.

OFFICE NO. IV.

The Secretary admitted, though with hesitation, that frauds were sometimes committed on insurance companies, and that the frauds were occasionally aided by the carelessness of the offices in receiving the evidence as to the health and habits of the person whose life was to be insured. He complained above all of the German cases. The Germans insured to a large extent in the English offices, the French scarcely insured at all. He knew an instance of a German, who, after insuring his life in a London office, caused a report of his death to be circulated, and was absolutely present at what was supposed to be his own funeral. On the exhumation of the coffin, it appeared that it contained nothing but stones. The Secretary added, that he had once himself to go to Ireland, to inquire into a case, in which a woman had been personated. Their medical agent had been bribed, he had made a favourable report, and the life had accordingly been taken. The sum insured for was £1,000. The office had refused to pay the claim, and the claim had not been pressed. He had seen the "life" who had personated the individual since dead.

OFFICE NO. V.

On entering the secretary's private room at the back of the business department, and presenting our letter to him, we saw that he at once comprehended our object, and he certainly lost no time in putting us in possession of such information as could leave no doubt in our mind of the extent to which frauds, sometimes of the most criminal nature, were practised upon insurance companies. He knew the case of J. only too well, J.'s life having been insured for a large amount with the company with which he was connected. J. was the son of a baronet, and had married the daughter of an earl. It had been represented to them (the Company) that J. had during his bachelorhood "lived freely," but that since his marriage he had been temperate, the more so as Lady J. had such command over him. It appeared that this free living consisted in getting into such a state of intoxication that it was found necessary to support his chin by means of a pitchfork. These fallacious statements of the medical referee as to habits were common. He remembered an instance of a man being reported to them as a person who "liked a glass of wine." He thought it advisable to make inquiries as to the number of glasses of wine that best pleased him. The question was shirked for some time; but at last, on his inquiring how the man usually reached his home at night, he was told that he was taken home every night in a wheelbarrow. With respect to J., it had been further stated, in answer to the usual inquiry from the office, that there had been no case of insanity in the family, although J. himself had had a keeper. J.'s ordinary medical attendant came up to London with him, when the insurance was about to be effected, "which," said the secretary, "looked very kind or very suspicious. It had been

imagined at the time, that the medical man in question had made his appearance in London in order to save trouble to the insurance company, by answering at once all such questions as might be put with reference to the soundness of the proposed life. The questions had, in almost all instances, been answered falsely."

The secretary was here kind enough to show us the report of the medical man on the health and habits of J. The style was an excellent specimen of affected candour. It was stated with apparent reluctance that Mr. J. did take two or three glasses of wine after dinner, and that he even smoked as many as three cigars in the course of the day; but then, as was forcibly asserted, he took so much exercise every day, and "Lady J. had such influence over him."

Lady A. (another case) was an old woman, and Lady A.'s husband was a young man. Her life (continued the secretary) was insured for five thousand pounds. After the policy had been granted, it was discovered that gross misrepresentations had been made as to the state of Lady A.'s health. The money was applied for, but the company refused to attend to it, and ultimately compromised the affair by paying three thousand pounds instead of the five thousand for which her life had been insured.

Tim Rooney (a third case) had his life insured, and the holder of the policy was anxious both to avoid paying the premiums while he was living, and to receive the sum insured for without Tim being dead. The next premium became due, and Tim Rooney's assignee was unable to pay it. He had still a few days' grace, when, crossing the Liffey at night with a party of friends, he saw a body floating on the stream. He lost no time in pulling it on shore, and then, with a look of pity, exclaimed, "Why, it's poor Tim Rooney!" His friends at first thought he was crazy; but when he repeated, "Sure enough it's Tim Rooney," adding, "and hadn't he to pay the next premium on his life," the whole party were polite enough to understand him. Accordingly, the report was circulated that Tim Rooney had fallen into the Liffey. An inquest was held, and it was decided that into the Liffey Tim Rooney had fallen. The news of the inquest got abroad, and in due time reached the insurance office. A certificate, signed by the coroner, and testifying as to the cause of death, was soon afterwards forwarded to the office, and the money for which Tim Rooney's life had been insured was paid to the "proper person." Some time afterwards, the agent met and identified Tim Rooney in Dublin streets. The agent reproached Tim with being still alive, and called upon him to account for his absence from the other world. "Was not an inquest held on you?" inquired the agent. "That there was," replied Tim; "and I'm told that twelve men sat on my body; but I'm not at all dead for all that."

OFFICE NO. VI.

The secretary informed us that he could not speak from his own personal knowledge of many cases of fraud, but that he was certain cases of fraud had occurred to a great extent during the last two years. His own office was very careful, but the young offices took a great many lives after the old offices had declined them altogether. The agents of his office often told him that they were in communication with persons who were anxious to insure their lives, but that these lives were not sufficiently good to offer to his (the secretary's) office, and accordingly they were taken to the young offices, who, in their anxiety to obtain business in the midst of so much competition, would insure a life under almost any circumstances. Without being fraudulent, many of the young offices accepted notoriously bad lives in order to be able to make some show of business in the annual report, trusting, at the same time, that they would get a sufficient number of good lives to compensate them for their risk. Others of the young offices were, however, conducted on fraudulent principles. They would insure almost any life, and when the life "dropped," would object to pay on the ground that there was some flaw in the policy—such as misrepresentation with regard to the health or habits of the person insured. By thus holding out to the executors or heirs of the deceased the prospect of an extensive lawsuit, they frequently induced them to accept one-half of the sum insured for. He told us, in conclusion, that Mr. P., a gentleman whose name is well known in connection with life assurance, could give us much information of the kind we desired.

EXPERIENCE AND OPINIONS OF MR. P.

We had already received a letter of introduction to the gentleman to whom the secretary of Office No. VI., had referred us. We found him in one of the courts out of Fleet Street, in the office of the newspaper of which he is the publisher, and which is known as the terror of the young insurance companies. Mr. P. was evidently suffering from indisposition, and we hesitated about troubling him on the subject with which we were occupied. We soon perceived that he had paid more attention to the question from our point of view than anyone with whom we had yet conversed. He gradually warmed with the subject which he knows so well, and in which he takes so much interest, and in a short time was quite a different person from the pale and suffering man whom we had noticed on our entrance.

Mr. P. was decidedly of opinion that the frauds on life insurance companies had increased considerably during the last two years, and that means were resorted to for accelerating the death of insured persons in far more cases than was generally supposed. The majority of the frauds were committed in Ireland, in consequence of the law allowing the person to insure another person's life without proving that he or she had a greater interest in the life than in the death of the person in question. Sometimes rich men would insure the lives of mere paupers merely as a speculation. A man wrote, some time since, from the Limerick workhouse to an insurance office, saying that his life had been insured for several hundred pounds; that he was in a very bad state of health; and that he was prepared to give five distinct reasons why the company should not pay a farthing of the sum insured for. At present he felt that he was sinking fast, but (continued the writer) if the company would place him in a comfortable house, and feed him well, he was convinced that he should get better and live for many years. The letter also contained a passionate appeal for ready money, which was to be sent by return of post, so as to prevent the author of the epistle from dying, and the company from having to pay a large sum of money to the persons who had insured his life. If brought to London, he felt that he could distinguish himself, and live to a good old age. He appeared to have stated in a previous letter, that he had met with a violent accident, which he now wished to explain away. "My accident," he says, "was a spark which fell in my eye"—after which he makes a final statement, to the effect that the company would do well to turn his abilities to account, as he is "a good clerk, and by profession a bricklayer."

This extraordinary epistle had been accompanied by a declaration, signed before a magistrate, and testifying to the falseness of the answers which had been given to the inquiries of the insurance company respecting the writer's life.

Mr. P. went down to Limerick on behalf of another company, which had received a proposal to insure the life of Kinna, the author of the above interesting epistle, and felt a natural anxiety to ascertain the real sanitary condition of a man who represented himself alternately as a dying man, and as one who was certain to live to a patriarchal old age. On arriving there he was told by one of the local magistrates, that he had "better mind what he was about, as they all dabbled a little in life insurance down there." Finding that Kinna had left the workhouse, he looked for him with great sagacity in the nearest tavern. He was soon recognised and surrounded by the inmates, who exclaimed frantically, "Here's a chap from the insurance office." They appeared at first inclined to destroy him, but their anger soon resolved itself into thirst, and they wanted to know "what he was going to stand." Having inquired for Kinna's address, he was told where he lived, but at the same time that he was a big man, and likely to thrash him or any one else connected with a life insurance office. Mr. P. nevertheless ventured in search of the interesting Kinna, and discovered him in a miserable hut at some distance from the town. Kinna not getting an answer from the insurance office to which he had applied for the money, had consented, for a small bonus, to have his life insured in another office. He imagined, however, that Mr. P. had come from the office to which he had written to forward money to him, and cherish him generally, and accordingly represented himself as suffering the most horrible tortures from an illness which could only be cured by the kindest treatment. One symptom which he complained of especially was an acute pain in the groin, which almost

lent him double. He felt unable to walk, and was convinced that he was breaking up and would soon die—unless the company did something for him. Mr. P. persuaded him to endeavour to walk a short distance, and by humouring him prevailed upon him to accompany him as far as the bridge, where policemen in plain clothes were in attendance in order to check any violence which might be offered by Kinna in case of his disapproving of any of the interrogations which Mr. P. intended to put to him. At last Kinna, determined to play a bold stroke, pretended that he could walk no more. "I am sinking," he exclaimed. "Then," replied Mr. P., emboldened by his proximity to the bridge, "I am afraid we shall be unable to accept your life." Kinna at once saw the mistake. Without being in the least abashed, he drew himself up to his full height (he had previously been almost crawling along the ground), and said to Mr. P., "Did you ever see my brother, now?" Mr. P. replied in the negative. "You have not?" continued Kinna, "then I'm just like him, and barring that I've lost my eye, I'm as good-looking a fellow as he is, and if you'd have known him you'd have known he's always had a pain in the groin, and that it's a family complaint of not the least importance at all."

Before Mr. P. took his departure from Limerick, a dinner was given to him by the patrons of life assurance. Kinna showed him a list of offices in which his life was assured, and inquired whether all the offices really existed, and were likely to pay? Mr. P. was observed by Kinna to be adding up the amounts assured for, and was requested not to do so. At this time Mr. P. had not completed his addition, but he had already arrived at a total of £30,000, and had only proceeded about two-thirds down the column. Kinna at last seriously requested to be removed from Limerick, stating that he had been assured to so great an extent, that he felt his life was unsafe in Limerick.

OFFICE NO. VII.

This office which is of the most respectable character had been started upon the principle, that all lives healthy or diseased might be insured without risk, provided the necessary inquiries were first of all made, so that a fair premium might in every case be charged. The Secretary knew the case of J. He was represented to the office as having lived "rather freely" until his marriage. His parents had been much opposed to the marriage on account of the drunkenness of their son. It appeared that he had been expelled from college on account of drunkenness. In reply to the usual question whether any insanity had occurred in the family, a negative answer had been returned, although he had been several days in confinement, and had absolutely left the asylum to get married. His life had been insured for upwards of £100,000.

The German cases gave a great deal of trouble—almost as much as the Irish cases. The Germans appeared very reckless of life. A German who had insured his life in his (the Secretary's) office, called upon the agent at Hamburg, and informed him that he was unable to pay his premium on the day on which it became due. The agent replied, that he was not empowered to grant time. The German hereupon stated, that unless time were given him he should blow his brains out. The agent smiled; but the desired time not being granted, the German blew his brains out, and his family in due time received the insurance money.

Another German who had insured at his office, blew his brains out after paying the first year's premium. In fact, suicide was so often committed in Germany by the assured for the benefit of their families, that his office had been obliged to alter their regulations as regarded the payment on policies in certain cases of self-destruction.

He was decidedly of opinion that assured lives were tampered with, and, above all, that the assured were frequently encouraged to drink heavily. Of this there was no doubt, although it was impossible for insurance companies to refuse payment, even when it could be proved that the deceased had been supplied with spirits in such quantities as rendered it almost certain that death must ensue. In a very few weeks Walter Palmer had had nineteen gallons of gin. If we had not taken the Secretary by surprise, he would have been able to supply us with the particulars of several cases in which lives had been tampered with. He considered that speculation in human life had much increased during the last two years.

OFFICE NO. VIII.

Here we heard fresh particulars of the case of M., the gentleman who had been found with the back of his head blown off in one of the Highland moors. M. had borrowed money, and at the same time insured his life for upwards of £40,000. He had to pay £1,500 a year as premium. Soon after the first premium had been paid, he was shot—it was impossible to say by whom.

J., (to whose case we have already alluded several times) being entitled to money on his father's death, had applied to the Norwich Union Reversionary Society for a loan of £3,000, which it granted, at the same time insuring his life for £25,000. The same society afterwards advanced him £13,000, and insured his life for £42,000. The Norwich Union had thus insured J.'s life for £66,000, and his life was understood to have been insured in other offices for £40,000 or £50,000 more. Mrs. J. and Mr. B. were in the house near St. Albans when J. died, and, immediately after his death, caused his body to be placed in the coach-house. In all probability J. had been encouraged to drink, although it had been long evident that he was destroying himself by his intemperate habits. He believed that many persons whose lives were insured were made away with by being encouraged to drink. This was of more common occurrence, however, in Ireland than in England. It was a common thing in Ireland to assure the life of an intemperate man, present him with a keg of whisky, and keep him constantly supplied with it until the life "fell in."

A case had come under his notice in which the body of a man who had been drowned having been discovered by the holder of an insurance policy, the holder of the policy thrust it into the pocket of the corpse, and succeeded in passing death off as that of himself. Similar cases of fraud frequently occurred.

OFFICE NO. IX.

The secretary of this office had been prevented for some days from attending at his place of business by indisposition. We ascertained that his illness was not of a serious character, and, having heard that he could give us the particulars of at least one case of the greatest importance, resolved to visit him at his private residence—at a distance of some dozen miles from London. He quite coincided with the other gentlemen with whom we had spoken on the subject, in the opinion that the number of suspicious deaths in connection with life assurance was on the increase. The recent case of a man named B. was one of the worst he had known. B. was a confirmed drunkard, and knew that he had a "dropping" life. A woollen-warehouseman in Cheapside, taking advantage of this fact, got him to insure his life in several offices, and gave him a commission on every insurance he effected. In time, B. got his life insured in numerous offices, and to a large amount. Before being sent to the insurance offices, to pass the board, B. would be made to abstain from drink during two or three days. He had then to take a warm bath; was dressed in a suit of new clothes, and ultimately treated to a gentle stimulant. When the desired insurance had been effected, B. was encouraged to drink as much as he liked. The office attended more to the statement of the medical man, who had been in the habit of attending the proposed "lie," than to the report of their own physician; and B. had been accepted without much difficulty, on account of the favourable report of his health given by his own medical attendant. It was not long before B. died. The woollen-draper brought an action against the insurance company for the money payable on B.'s death, but the insurance company gained it. It was afterwards discovered that B.'s "physician" in ordinary had forged his M.D. diploma, for which he was sentenced to imprisonment.

M. (another case), who had been found dead, under suspicious circumstances, on a Highland moor, was a barrister. He had lived many years in India, and had spent three different fortunes. He came to London some time since, and took a house in Belgrave. He next purchased a sugar-bakery at the West End, to pay for which he had to raise money. He was endeavouring to get a bill discounted, when some one met him, and asked him whether he was aware that his bill was being hawked all over London? M. resolved to insure, so as the more readily to effect a loan. He succeeded in insuring it for upwards of £40,000, for which he had to pay an annual premium of £500. It had been proved, however, that his means were

very limited, and his death, in the manner previously stated, took place soon after the payment of the first premium.

OFFICE NO. X.

The secretary was acquainted with a case in which a surgeon had effected an insurance for £1,000 on the life of his wife. Declined to state names or district, but was certain that foul play had been going on, and accordingly informed the surgeon so; and declared that unless he gave the policy up he would denounce him to the police. The wife had fits, vomiting, &c., and died the very day after the policy was given up. If the body were now exhumed, the poison would be found in it; and he had told the directors of the company so three years since.

He knew of another case, in which a wife, whose life had been insured for £40, had died under suspicious circumstances after three years' payments. The surgeon's bill had not been paid, and the surgeon began to talk and to hint suspicion to the insurance office. They derived a good deal of information in that way from surgeons. He was morally convinced that the lives of the assured were frequently made away with. The assurance of a wife's life by her husband was always suspicious—unless the wife was assisting the husband in his business, or had an annuity.

He would not accept the life of a surgeon's wife on any account.

The report of the medical referee ought always to be received with extreme care. He always made a point of inquiring strictly as to the medical man's position and character in the world. A vast quantity of poisoning took place in connection with the joint-life system, or that in which the survivor of two persons had to receive money.

In the last two years, the revelations in connection with life assurance offices had been frightful, and every insurance office had very suspicious cases, but they were afraid to speak out, as the accusation was so terrible and difficult of legal proof. Still, moral conviction was another thing, and that conviction most companies entertained, although they were generally too cautious to say so. He hoped his name, and that of the office he was connected with, might be suppressed, but we were quite welcome to use the facts.

The case of J. was very suspicious. The Jew bill-discounters appeared to have planted people on him. Always objected to the life of a young man who was anticipating his expectations.

Palmer's agent had called at his office to try and effect an insurance, but he had already heard whispers about him, and refused the life point blank, without even consulting the directors.

"What! you will not even consult your directors about it?" said the agent.

"No," replied the gentleman: "I have my private reasons for acting as I do."

The agent, of course, disappeared.

OFFICE NO. XI.

Frauds were of daily occurrence, said the Manager. Ireland was the great place for them. A man would meet another in the street, and hear that so-and-so is looking pale. He immediately calls on him, and says, "If you would like to have that better bitch of mine, you can do so on one condition. Insure your life, assign the policy to me, and the animal's yours." The assignment having been effected, the holder of the policy spreads the report everywhere that the assured man is dangerously ill. The policy is soon sold for more than its value. Soon afterwards the story is told again, the man's state being worse than before, and the policy is again sold at a further advance, and in this way sometimes passes through fifty different hands. The German Jews in Frankfurt had now learnt the trick of insuring "dropping lives." It was said among the offices that, by being deceived into accepting these "dropping lives," one company had lost as much as £148,000, although it would not admit that such had been the case, for the sake of its credit.

In Wales the people were nearly as bad as in Ireland. The other day, a life at Newport had been proposed for £3,000; when on looking at the paper, it appeared that the man could not write his own name. On inquiry it appeared that he was a retired grocer, living on very slender means. The life was accepted, the policy was assigned, and the friends of the assured subscribed to take a room for him at the public-house, where orders were given that he should be supplied with whatever he chose to drink. In a week the man was dead.

The other day, a lieutenant in the navy, who was insured in their office, died. The medical man, on looking over the certificate of death, became convinced that foul play had been resorted to, and that the deceased had not died a natural death. The company refused to pay on the policy, and no steps were taken.

A husband had no right to insure his wife's life, for he had no interest in her life, although she might have in his. The insurance of a wife's life was always a suspicious affair. A case had occurred in England of a man procuring the corpse of a poor man, causing it to be passed off as his own, in order to obtain the insurance money, and presiding at the burial of his second self—at which ceremony he was, however, arrested by the company's agents.

OFFICE XII.

The Secretary of this office would not insure the life of a wife in favour of her husband, nor did he think any other office would, unless it could be distinctly shown that the husband had a direct interest in his wife's life. Certainly he would not accept the life of a surgeon's wife. Believed that half the frauds on assurance offices were committed through the surgeons. The medical referees were generally the friends of the persons assured, and seldom hesitated to make false statements. Medical examiners were almost useless to assurance offices. Thought the morale of the medical profession, so far as his own experience went, was at a very low ebb. Would not trust any but men of the highest standing. It was certainly true that the mortality among assured females was greater than among assured males, though the contrary was the case among the uninsured. The tables of the Registrar-General established this point. One assurance company had at one time taken the lives of females at smaller premiums than those of men on account of the rate of mortality being in their favour. The company soon, however, found out its mistake.

He certainly believed that many "dropping" lives were helped off by means of drink. The joint-life system was also a fruitful cause of fraud.

Walter Palmer's life had been offered to them. Indeed, his agent had said that they might have it on any terms. He knew that the object was to be able to state that the life had been accepted in their office, so that it might afterwards be assured in other offices. He considered that the only means of preventing the gambling and tampering with life would be to make all policies indisputable, except in cases of fraud or intentional misstatement. This would have the effect of making them more cautious. We suggested that the policies of every office were now virtually indisputable, for it was only upon deception being proved that the companies refused to pay the assurance money.

OFFICE XIII.

The information we obtained from this company was unsought on our part. It had become mooted abroad that we were inquiring into the cases of fraud and suspicious deaths known to insurance offices, and the actuary of one of the oldest and most respectable companies, whom we had intended to visit on a future occasion, waited upon us and said he would be happy to communicate to us a case that had come under his own experience, and which was one of even greater atrocity than either the Rugeley or Mauchester cases which were now engrossing public attention.

The gentleman began by stating to us that he had no doubt that a great deal of poisoning took place in connection with life assurance—a great deal, he repeated. The case to which he referred was that of a Mrs. E. "I myself was the means," he said, "of tracing that out, and of exposing the whole affair." Mrs. E. came to the office in her carriage to effect an insurance upon Ann E., whom she described as a friend of hers, and whose life she had already insured for £3,000 in one office, £2,500 in a second, and £700 in a third—that is to say, £6,200 in all. The medical referee was P. C., a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, and who now resides near one of the fashionable squares at the West End. At the time there appeared to be little or nothing suspicious in the transaction; but in three months after the assurance had been effected, Ann E. died, and it was then discovered that Mrs. E. had effected large assurances upon almost every member of her family, and that they one and all had died shortly after the proposals had been ac-

cepted. Upon her father's life (E. D.), she had effected an assurance for £3,000 in one office, £400 in a second, and £2,000 in a third, while the life had been refused, or £2,000 by a fourth. In this case the medical referee bore the name P. C., the "M.R.C.S." of the fashionable square before referred to. The lady had also effected assurances on the life of her sister, Dinah E. She had a policy upon her for £2,500 in one office, and £2,700 in another, and had tried to effect other assurances upon the same life to the extent of £20,700; but all of them had been refused. In this case, too, the medical referee was the same honourable member of the Royal College of Surgeons, Mr. P. C., of the fashionable square at the West End. Further, the same lady had had policies granted upon the lives of almost every member of her family, and in every case the assured had died within a few months after the assurance had been effected, the certificates of death being invariably signed by the Honourable M.R.C.S., who had figured as medical referee in connection with all the cases. These circumstances were so suspicious, that though a considerable number of the offices, to avoid litigation, had paid up the amounts shortly after the deaths, the gentleman who gave us the information advised the directors of his company to resist the claim, and an action was accordingly brought and tried.

Sir James Scarlett, afterwards Lord Abinger, was the counsel employed by the company, while Mr. Campbell, now the Lord Chief Justice, was retained for Mrs. E., the plaintiff. Sir James Scarlett, on being made acquainted with the fact, did not hesitate to exclaim, "Why, the beast of a woman must have made away with the lives of some thirty persons, at least."

During the trial, the surgeon, P. C., who had acted as medical referee in all the cases, and who had likewise signed all the certificates of death, which he attributed in every instance to cholera morbus, was put into the witness box. He was then asked whether he had been the medical referee in such and such a case, and "whether that medical certificate was in his handwriting?"—"Yes," was the extorted answer.

"And that?"—"Yes."

"And that?"—"Yes"—and so on to the extent of no less than thirty vouchers of death, which attributed the decease of all the assured individuals to a disorder like cholera morbus, which was then unknown in England!

Nevertheless, Mr. Campbell made, in the words of an informant, "a slashing speech" in favour of the lady plaintiff, denouncing the company as a body of slanderers, who did not hesitate to throw even the stigma of murder upon a lady to avoid the payment of a paltry sum. The speech was so effective that the jury were carried away by the rhetoric, and gave a verdict for the plaintiff. The trial was reported, as a matter of course, in the papers of the following day, and the publicity given to the facts brought a volley of letters, volunteering information concerning the said Mrs. E., the lady prisoner. It then transpired that the lady had been the inmate of an hospital for females, the inmates of which are not remarkable for their virtue; that she was then cohabiting with an eminent baronet-banker of the West End, and to whom had belonged the carriage in which she had invariably called to effect the assurances, and the appearance of which had aided her materially in doing so!

The new information was embodied in affidavits, and an application was made for a new trial, and granted. Upon this, the female prisoner, finding her history discovered, took flight, and returned to Paris with the many thousand pounds she had already extracted from the more timorous of the assurance companies. She was never afterwards heard of, nor were the bodies exhumed for post-mortem examination; though, said our informant, had this been done, there could be no doubt but that the revelations would have been more horrible even than those which are at present astounding the public from Rugeley and Manchester. This statement, we should add, was duly certified to us by the production of all the papers in connection with it; and, at the same time, a list of the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons was shown to us, and the name of P. C., the medical referee, pointed out as still in practice in the neighbourhood of one of the fashionable squares of the West End. Our informant further corroborated all we had heard of the suspicion invariably to be connected with the assurance of the lives of wives in whose existence the husband had no positive pecuniary interest, and stated that no respectable office in London would ever consent to grant a policy to a person on the life of his wife unless the most cogent reasons were adduced for his requiring it. Though it is sometimes alleged that the life of the wife is to be assured for the benefit of the children, the reply of the old-established houses invariably is, "Then why cannot the husband assure his life for the same sum in their favour?"

Here ends our inquiry for the present; and the conclusions to which our investigations have brought us are:—

1. That the positive evidence of some of the insurance offices, as well as the negative proofs afforded by the extreme cautiousness of other offices, warrant us in asserting that the tampering with life with a view to become possessed of the insurance money, is more general than the public believe, and than some of the companies are disposed to state.
2. That this is borne out, not only by the several cases cited above, but also by certain statistics which are hereunder referred to.
3. That the tampering with lives is principally carried on in connection with Irish policies, the statistics of life assurance establishing this beyond the possibility of doubt.
4. That a large number of suspicious cases in connection with life policies occur either directly or indirectly through the agency of the dishonourable portion of the medical profession.
5. That the speculation in the lives of the assured is promoted by two principal causes:—
 - a. By the granting of policies to persons who have not a greater interest in the life than in the death of the assured.
 - b. By the eagerness of the young insurance offices to obtain lives; so that they are induced, in starting, to accept them on any terms without due examination, as well as to grant policies for large amounts, in order that the magnitude of the sum may produce an impression in the annual report.
6. That the over-eagerness of insurance offices to do business arises from the great number of companies, and the excessive competition existing among them. And that the continued increase by the number of companies is explained by the fact that they are mostly started by adventurers with a view to obtain the lucrative situation of actuary, secretary, solicitor, medical officer, chairman, or director.
7. That it is the duty of Government, as the great protector of society, to suppress by every legitimate means in its power, the various causes above enumerated as productive of such disastrous results.

It now only remains for us to show, by reference to the statistics in connection with the subject, that the statements and opinions which we have collected from the most intelligent officers connected with the insurance companies are fully borne out by figures. And that as the returns show that the number of fires occurring among insured houses have increased to such an extent over and above the number of fires among uninsured houses, as to warrant the suspicion of fraud; so do the returns of the number of deaths occurring among those on whose lives policies have been effected, prove, that in those cases where the assureds have usually less interest in the lives than in the deaths of the assured, the rate of mortality is greater than it should be, according to the returns of the Registrar-General, to the ratio of deaths occurring among the same classes when uninsured.

On Monday, March 19th, 1838, a meeting of actuaries and others was held at the London Coffee House, Ludgate Hill, with the view of forming a committee to obtain from the different assurance offices data requisite to determine the law of mortality which prevails among assured lives. After this circulars were issued, inviting contributions for that purpose, and the returns when obtained were duly tabulated and arranged systematically, so as to form what are now known as the Experience Tables of the assurance companies.

The committee in laying these tables before the public, state that the most striking features exhibited in them, are the high rates of mortality which prevail among Irish lives, in which we have seen that the greatest amount of speculation is carried on, and the marked difference in the rate of mortality which exist between males and females. See the "New Rate of Mortality," by Mr. Jenkyn Jones, pp. 16, 17.

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